



# Supplemental Clinical Criteria: Optum Psychological and Neuropsychological Testing

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## Introduction & Instructions for Use

### Introduction

*The Supplemental Clinical Criteria to the American Psychological Association’s (APA) Psychological and Neuropsychological Testing Billing and Coding Guide*, provides further guidance regarding provider qualifications, coverage rationale and limitations, and developmental testing specific to behavioral health benefit plans managed by Optum®.

### Instructions for Use

This Supplemental Clinical Criteria is used along with the *American Psychological Association’s Psychological and Neuropsychological Testing Billing and Coding Guide* to make coverage decisions as well as to inform discussions about evidence-based practices and discharge planning for behavioral health benefit plans managed by Optum. When deciding coverage, the member’s specific benefits must be referenced.

All reviewers must first identify member eligibility, the member-specific benefit plan coverage, and any federal or state regulatory requirements that supersede the member’s benefits prior to using this guideline. In the event that the requested service or procedure is limited or excluded from the benefit, is defined differently or there is otherwise a conflict between this guideline and the member’s specific benefit, the member’s specific benefit supersedes this guideline. Other clinical criteria may apply. Optum reserves the right, in its sole discretion, to modify its clinical criteria as necessary using the process described in Clinical Criteria.

This guideline is provided for informational purposes. It does not constitute medical advice.

Optum may also use tools developed by third parties that are intended to be used in connection with the independent professional medical judgment of a qualified health care provider and do not constitute the practice of medicine or medical

advice. Optum may develop clinical criteria or adopt externally-developed clinical criteria that supersede this guideline when required to do so by contract or regulation.

## Benefit Considerations

*Before using this policy, please check the member-specific benefit plan document and any federal or state mandates, if applicable.*

## Provider Qualifications

### Psychological Testing

Psychological Test Evaluation Services is a set of formal procedures utilizing reliable and validated tests designed to measure areas of intellectual, cognitive emotional, and behavioral functioning, in addition to identifying psychopathology, personality style, interpersonal processes, and adaptive skills. Service activities can include test selection, review of records, consultation with referral source, integration of clinical data, clinical decision making, preparation of the testing report, and reviewing the results of testing with member and/or caregivers.

- The provider's professional training and licensure must include one of the following:
  - A doctoral-level psychologist who is licensed to practice independently and demonstrates sufficient training and experience.
  - A masters-degreed behavioral health professional whose licensure specifically allows for provision of psychological testing services.
    - The masters-degreed provider has professional expertise in the types of tests/assessments being administered.
    - The masters-degreed provider is conducting test evaluation services in accordance with licensing standards and psychological testing professional and ethical standards.

Psychological Test Administration and Scoring is the formal process of administering reliable and validated tests selected by the doctoral-level psychologist or qualified masters-degreed provider according to standardized test manual instructions and scoring the respondents answers to test items.

- The provider's professional training and licensure must include one of the following:
  - A doctoral-level psychologist who is licensed to practice independently and demonstrates sufficient training and experience.
  - A psychometrist or psychometrician who administers and scores psychological tests under the supervision of a licensed doctoral-level psychologist, and whose services are billed by the supervising psychologist.
    - The supervising psychologist must have face-to-face contact with the member at intake and during the feedback session.
    - The supervising psychologist is also responsible for final test interpretation, report writing, and final signature of approval.
  - A masters-degreed behavioral health professional whose licensure specifically allows for provision of psychological testing services.
    - The masters-degreed provider has professional expertise in the types of tests/assessments being administered.
    - The masters-degreed provider is conducting test administration and scoring in accordance with licensing standards and psychological testing professional and ethical standards.

### Neuropsychological Testing

Neuropsychological Test Evaluation Services is a set of formal procedures utilizing reliable and valid tests specifically focused on identifying the presence of brain damage, injury, or dysfunction, and any associated functional deficits. Service activities can include test selection, review of records, consultation with referral source, integration of clinical data, clinical decision making, preparation of the testing report, and reviewing the results of testing with member and/or caregivers.

- Neuropsychological testing is within the scope of the provider's professional training and licensure when the provider is any of the following:
  - A doctoral-level psychologist who is licensed to practice independently and demonstrates sufficient training and experience.
  - A credentialed psychiatrist who meets the following requirements:

- Recognized certification in neurology through the American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology;
- Accreditation in behavioral neurology and neuropsychiatry through the American Neuropsychiatric Association;
- State medical licensure specifically allowing for the provision of neuropsychological testing service(s);
- Evidence of professional training and expertise in the specific tests and/or assessment measures for which authorization is requested;
- Physician and supervised psychometrician(s) adhere to the prevailing national professional and ethical standards regarding test administration, scoring, and interpretation.

Neuropsychological Test Administration and Scoring is the formal process of administering reliable and validated tests selected by the doctoral-level psychologist or qualified provider according to standardized test manual instructions and scoring the respondents answers to test items.

- Neuropsychological Test Administration and Scoring is within the scope of the provider’s professional training and licensure when the provider is any of the following:
  - A doctoral-level psychologist who is licensed to practice independently and demonstrates sufficient training and experience.
  - A psychometrist or psychometrician who administers and scores psychological tests under the supervision of a licensed doctoral-level psychologist, and whose services are billed by the supervising psychologist.
    - The supervising psychologist must have face-to-face contact with the member at intake and during the feedback session.
    - The supervising psychologist is also responsible for final test interpretation, report writing, and final signature of approval.
  - A credentialed psychiatrist who meets the following requirements:
    - Recognized certification in neurology through the American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology;
    - Accreditation in behavioral neurology and neuropsychiatry through the American Neuropsychiatric Association;
    - State medical licensure specifically allowing for the provision of neuropsychological testing service(s);
    - Evidence of professional training and expertise in the specific tests and/or assessment measures for which authorization is requested;
    - Physician and supervised psychometrician(s) adhere to the prevailing national professional and ethical standards regarding test administration, scoring, and interpretation.

## Automated Testing and Result

Automated Testing and Result is primarily a method of screening for potentially clinically significant intellectual, cognitive, emotional, and behavioral symptoms or functional deficits that utilizes a single reliable and validated instrument that has fully automated administration, scoring and interpretation. Automated Testing may also be used to quickly estimate changes in clinical status over time either as a method of obtaining an objective measure of progress in treatment or periodic objective surveillance of known risk issues.

- Automated Testing and Result is within the scope of the provider’s professional training and licensure when the provider is any of the following:
  - A doctoral-level psychologist who is licensed to practice independently and demonstrates sufficient training and experience.
  - A masters-degreed behavioral health professional whose licensure specifically allows for provision of psychological testing services.
    - The masters-degreed provider has professional expertise in the types of tests/assessments being administered.
    - The masters-degreed provider is conducting test administration, scoring and interpretation in accordance with licensing standards and psychological testing professional and ethical standards.
  - A credentialed psychiatrist who meets the following requirements:
    - Recognized certification in neurology through the American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology;
    - Accreditation in behavioral neurology and neuropsychiatry through the American Neuropsychiatric Association;
    - State medical licensure specifically allowing for the provision of neuropsychological testing service(s);
    - Evidence of professional training and expertise in the specific tests and/or assessment measures for which authorization is requested;
    - Physician and supervised psychometrician(s) adhere to the prevailing national professional and ethical standards regarding test administration, scoring, and interpretation.

## Coverage Rationale/Limitations

- If tele-assessment services have been in place during the COVID-19 crisis, when it becomes safe and feasible to resume in-person services, the recommendations for the use of tele-assessment should not override typical and standardized practice outlined in the APA Psychological and Neuropsychological Testing Billing and Coding Guide. However, they are meant to allow for at least some continuity of the care and needed services provided during this unprecedented time<sup>1</sup>.
- Neuropsychological testing is unproven and not medically necessary for the following:
  - Baseline neuropsychological testing in asymptomatic persons at risk for sport-related concussions
  - Computerized neuropsychological testing when used alone for evaluating concussions
  - Neuropsychological testing for the following diagnoses alone without other covered conditions as noted above:
    - Headaches, including migraine headache;
    - History of myocardial infarction;
    - Intermittent explosive disorder.
  - Computerized cognitive testing, such as Mindstreams® Cognitive Health Assessment, BrainCare™ and QbTest.

## Developmental, Cognitive and Brief Emotional Assessment

- Assessment of Aphasia (96105) is the evaluation of expressive and receptive speech and language function, language comprehension, speech production ability, spelling or writing with interpretation and report per hour. This procedure is often conducted by a speech language therapist. It is not considered a form of psychological testing and is not typically covered under the behavioral health benefit.
- Standardized cognitive performance testing (96125) is an occupational therapy assessment used to assess capacity to function in activities of daily living. It is not considered a form of psychological or neuropsychological testing and is not typically covered under the behavioral health benefit.
- Developmental Testing (96110, 96112, 96113) is an adjunct to the routine surveillance for developmental delays in young children. This procedure is often conducted by a developmental pediatrician, or a speech, language, physical or occupational therapist. It is not considered a form of psychological testing and is not typically covered under the behavioral health benefit unless contractually required to manage as a behavioral health service.
- Brief emotional/behavioral assessment (96127) is typically used in primary care settings for early detection of potential conditions or disorders, to monitor progress in treatment or track changes in symptoms over time. Results of brief self-report screening assessments can also be used to inform decisions about whether to refer for psychological or neuropsychological testing. Brief screening assessments should not be used for making definitive diagnostic decisions and are not considered to be psychological or neuropsychological testing. This service code is not typically included on behavioral contracts or fee schedules and most often is managed under medical benefits.

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<sup>1</sup> American Psychological Association, Guidance on psychological tele-assessment during the COVID-19 crisis, May 1, 2020.

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## Revision History

Date	Summary of Changes
1/1/2021	Version 1
3/1/2022	Version 2 – Annual Review
2/2023	Version 3 – Annual Review