Standards

For

Specialty Board Certification

By the American Board of Professional Psychology

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Standards for Specialty Board Certification

Introduction

As a unitary organization of member Specialty Boards in professional psychology, the primary function of the American Board of Professional Psychology (ABPP) is to maintain a process of high quality, criteria-based specialty board certification of psychologists through the affiliation, oversight and support of its member boards. As affirmed in its organizational mission, the ABPP “establishes and maintains basic standards for Member Boards” and “establishes basic standards for applications and examinations.” This Standards Manual enumerates the ABPP standards and procedures related to the certification process, from application to presentation of the credential. The standards apply to member Specialty Boards, the ABPP Governance, Certified Specialists, and Central Office administration. The Standards Manual is designed to contribute to the goal of promoting a certification process recognized by the public and the profession for its quality and integrity.

The Manual is in seven related sections. The first section describes the scope and composition of the Standards Committee. The second section describes the standards for the organization and operation of Specialty Boards. The third and fourth sections describe the criteria for candidate eligibility and examination in a specialty. The fifth section addresses the organization’s policy and procedures related to appeals of adverse decisions. The sixth section describes the maintenance of certification guidelines and the seventh addresses how board certified specialists represent the ABPP credential.

I. The ABPP Standards Committee

The Standards Committee 1) monitors, evaluates, and approves candidacy (eligibility) requirements and examinations proposed by new specialties or implemented by member Specialty Boards; 2) reviews, evaluates, and approves proposed substantive changes in candidate eligibility requirements; 3) conducts periodic reviews of written examinations, practice samples, and oral examinations in each specialty; 4) supports the development of standards of practice; 5) promotes innovative examination methods, quality assurance procedures, and efficiency of the examination process; 6) oversees appeals of adverse decisions of all Specialty Boards; and 7) develops standards for maintenance of certification.

Committee Composition: The committee is chaired by the Past President of the Board of Trustees and includes at least two members of the Board of Trustees, the Executive Officer, and such other members as may seem advisable.

II. Specialty Board Standards

The following standards and related procedures apply to all member Specialty Boards of the American Board of Professional Psychology (ABPP), the ABPP Governance, and Central Office.

A. General Purpose and Functions
The primary functions of each Specialty Board are: (1) to regulate itself as a responsible member board of the ABPP, actively performing the functions as the specialty certification examining body of the specialty; and (2) to credential qualified psychologists in the specialty.

B. Board Maintenance
In order to regulate itself responsibly, each Specialty Board shall:

1. Continue to reflect a membership that is national in scope and representative of the current practice of the specialty.
2. Reflect stability in its functions and fiscal responsibility.
3. Function separately from any education, training, and accrediting body.
4. Follow a non-discrimination policy and encourage diversity.
5. Maintain a close, collaborative relationship with the Board of Trustees through its recommended and elected Trustee.
6. Function in accord with the By-laws, Policies and Procedures of ABPP and additionally of the specialty.
7. Select new board members from a slate of board certified nominees in the specialty. The process should be determined and described by each Specialty Board.

C. Credentials Review and Examination Procedures Leading to Certification
The Specialty Board, with support by the Central Office, plans, organizes, and implements credential review, verification and examinations.
1. Each Specialty Board is responsible for establishing candidate specialty-specific eligibility criteria related to the education/training, competencies, and experience requirements of the specialty, built upon the common standards of the ABPP.
2. Each Specialty Board designs, administers, and evaluates the effectiveness of its examinations. In cooperation with the Academies, it selects mentors and examiners and helps with their training. The development and implementation of a reliable and valid examination with high fidelity is a major responsibility of the Specialty Board. The Specialty Board is guided by the generic candidacy and examination standards of the ABPP and its specialty-specific standards and procedures.

D. Relationships and Communication
Each Specialty Board has a responsibility to relate and communicate with the profession, the specialty’s applicant base, the Academy, certified specialists, and the public, as appropriate.
1. The profession. Each Specialty Board relates particularly to relevant professional organizations and groups in the specialty, in order to influence and be influenced by developments in the specialty that contribute to the establishment of standards in the specialty.
2. The applicant base. Each Specialty Board, in collaboration with the corresponding Academy, shall communicate in its documents the criteria, terms, and conditions of attaining certification in the specialty. For example, applicants should be provided with eligibility criteria for board certification. Candidates should be provided with a description of the practice sample requirements, as well as the examination format and criteria, and appeals procedures. Such communications should be current and readily available.
3. The Academy. Each Specialty Board should keep the corresponding Academy informed of its actions. The Academy should keep the Specialty Board informed of its activities. The relationship between the Specialty Board and its corresponding Academy is such that there is mutual representation of each entity on their respective boards.
4. The Board of Trustees. Each Specialty Board sustains its relationship and major governance responsibility to the Board of Trustees through its elected Trustee. Each Specialty Board should effectively inform and integrate its Trustee in Specialty Board activities, either as a member of the board or as ex-officio member of the board. Similarly, the Trustee should effectively inform the Specialty Board concerning Board of Trustees activities and actions. See ABPP Policy and Procedures, Section X for details.
5. Communication. Each Specialty Board shall use as many avenues as possible to communicate with its specialists, particularly through the ABPP publication (The ABPP Specialist), and ABPP and Specialty Board Web sites. Each Specialty Board should communicate with the public, particularly through the ABPP Web site and other media outlets.

E. Specialty Board Evaluation and Quality Enhancement
Each Specialty Board demonstrates a commitment to excellence through self-study and its relationship to the ABPP Standards Committee and other committees.
1. Each Specialty Board continually strives to meet the relevant, basic standards including diversity, established by the Board of Trustees, particularly standards for candidacy and the examination.
2. Each Specialty Board should provide an annual report to the Board of Trustees and make a summary of this report available to the Academy, certified specialists, The ABPP Specialist, and other interested parties. Annual reports should summarize the examination activity of the Specialty Board, identify newly elected board members, and describe other important activities, including but not limited to examination development, maintenance of certification plans, and diversity initiatives. Minutes of Specialty Board meetings should also be provided to the Board of Trustees on a regular basis.

3. Each Specialty Board strives to improve its examination by self-study, objective study, awareness and application of state-of-the-art examination methods, training of examiners, and evaluation of its examination process.

4. Each Specialty Board is subject to a Periodic Comprehensive Review every six years which includes an on-site visit of a Specialty Board Governance Meeting and an “examination session” conducted by the Executive Officer and a representative of the Standards Committee. A focused Specialty Board self-study shall be part of the process. A Periodic Comprehensive Review report, with a commentary on that report by the Specialty Board, shall be submitted by the review team to the Board of Trustees. The goal of the review is to evaluate total Specialty Board functioning and identify areas of possible improvement of that functioning through a reasonable, manageable plan.

III. ABPP Generic and Specialty Specific Standards

The intent of Specialty Board certification is to provide assurance to the public and the profession that a psychologist specialist certified by ABPP has successfully completed an approved, systematic program of education, training, and experience, and an examination designed to assess the competencies (i.e., knowledge, skills, attitudes, and their integration) and experience required to provide quality services in that specialty.

Both generic and specialty specific requirements are necessary to establish candidacy to sit for examinations.

As an introductory summary: the common or generic requirements include:

- A **doctoral degree** from a **program in professional psychology**
- A **program in professional psychology** is defined as one which includes scientific discipline foundations, practice foundations, and integrated practicum and internship supervised practice.

The essential or characteristic specialty specific requirements include:

- Advanced academic (foundational) knowledge in the specialty which may be acquired in a number of ways, at the doctoral and postdoctoral levels.
- Advanced level supervision or program (residency, other professional curricula or training experiences) in the specialty at the postdoctoral level.

A more detailed description of the above requirements follows in A and B.

A. **Generic Requirements.** The generic requirements are:

**Doctoral Degree:** The applicant shall hold an earned doctorate, i.e., Ph.D., Psy.D., or Ed.D. from a doctoral program in professional psychology as defined below:

**Doctoral Program in Professional Psychology:** To qualify as a candidate, the applicant must have successfully completed a doctoral program in professional psychology that, at the time the degree was granted, met the generic requirement in Appendix A and B of this manual.

In order to simplify and expedite the generic verification process, it is noted that over 90% of applications to the ABPP meet one or more of the four qualifications listed below. Each of these qualifiers meets the ABPP generic requirements and therefore is an acceptable verification of these requirements. If the applicant believes that he or she is qualified, but does not meet one of the four qualifiers below, they may request an individualized review of documented educational preparation by the ABPP Executive Officer.
1. The Doctoral Program is accredited by the American Psychological Association or the Canadian Psychological Association, or
2. A designated The Doctoral Program is listed in the publication, Doctoral Psychology Programs Meeting Designation Criteria, or
3. The applicant is currently listed as a health service provider in the current directory of National Register of Health Service Providers in Psychology, or the Canadian Register of Health Service Providers in Psychology, or
4. The applicant currently holds the Certificate of Professional Qualifications in Psychology from the Association of State and Provincial Psychology Boards, qualifying as meeting doctoral degree and professional program requirements.

Some Doctoral Degree/Program Exceptions

1. Doctoral degrees granted prior to 1983. It has been the policy of the ABPP to recognize earlier standards for applicants with professional preparation prior to 1983. The American Psychological Association's landmark comprehensive accreditation guidelines and principles were distributed in 1979 and ABPP has extended a several year grace period beyond 1979 for compliance with these standards. Applicants with degrees granted in and after 1983 must meet current requirements.

2. Re-education as a Professional Psychologist. Formal programs of the re-education of non-professional doctoral degree psychologists may be recognized as qualifying psychologists for the degree/program requirements. These programs are not postdoctoral level programs, but doctoral level programs completed by psychologists with a doctorate in a non-professional program. Limited exceptions exist for doctoral preparation completed prior to 1983 as noted above, degrees granted outside the United States or Canada, formal retraining, substantial equivalents to accreditation requirements, and licensure in jurisdiction of practice for some Federal and Military psychologists. Exception criteria and procedures are available from Central Office. See ABPP Policies and Procedures for details.

3. International Applicants.
   a) Applicants who are educated outside of the United States and Canada and practice in another country are not eligible for candidacy.
   b) Applicants educated outside the United States and Canada but now living in the United States or Canada are eligible for candidacy if the doctoral degree/program and licensing requirements of the ABPP are met.
   c) Applicants educated in the United States or Canada meeting the doctoral degree/program requirements of the ABPP but living and practicing outside of these countries may be eligible for candidacy if the statutory requirement of that country is met for the practice of psychology.

B. Specialty Specific Requirements

In addition to the generic, foundation requirements for all specialties, each specialty requires advanced level knowledge acquired in different ways at the doctoral and, most particularly, at the postdoctoral level. Similarly, advanced supervision in the practice of the specialty is required at the postdoctoral level.

The “traditional” or long recognized specialty programs of clinical, counseling, and school psychology have been and are accredited by the American Psychological Association or the Canadian Psychological Association at the doctoral level. An applicant who has graduated from an American Psychological Association or the Canadian Psychological Association accredited program in any of these specialties is considered to meet that specialty’s specific requirements, with the exception of the postdoctoral year(s) of supervised experience. Further, the American Psychological Association recently has begun accrediting postdoctoral residency specialty programs in traditional and new specialties. At the discretion of the Specialty Board, applicants successfully completing an American Psychological Association accredited postdoctoral residency specialty program may be considered to meet both the generic and specialty specific requirements, and may be allowed to sit for the examination following the attainment of licensure at the independent level of practice.
For those specialties not accredited by the American Psychological Association or the Canadian Psychological Association at the doctoral level or at the postdoctoral residency level, documentation of the specialty’s specific requirements and postdoctoral supervised practice as defined by each specialty must be met. These specialty preparation requirements are established by each specialty and described in application brochures, manuals, and appropriate forms readily available to applicants. The requirements vary with specialties and are established by each specialty board consistent with national standards in the specialty. Each specialty must meet the following minimal postdoctoral supervised practice requirement:

- One year of postdoctoral practice in the specialty under appropriate supervision, or
- Successful completion of a postdoctoral residency program in the specialty accredited by the American Psychological Association or Canadian Psychological Association or recognized by the Specialty Board.

Experience. The requisite experience is gained through the required supervised postdoctoral practice in the specialty and subsequent practice in the specialty. Some specialties may require experience at the independent practice level beyond experience gained during supervised practice.

Licensure. All applicants, candidates, and certified specialists must be licensed or certified at the independent practice level.

Licensure Exception. ABPP specialty certification is not an academic recognition, but is recognition of a practicing specialist. With very few exceptions, practice in the public sector requires statutory licensure or certification. The following exception is recognized:

- Active duty federal and military uniformed service psychologists when practicing in those roles (All federal and military psychologists must be licensed in a jurisdiction).

Professional Identification and Good Standing
Applicants, candidates, and board certified specialists must actively identify with the profession and the specialty. This includes involvement in and awareness of local, state or provincial, and national professional issues, and participation in appropriate specialty organizations and continuing education. Good standing within the profession and with appropriate statutory bodies governing the practice of psychology is required.

IV. Specialty Examinations

Each Specialty Board develops and implements an examination process which provides the candidate with an opportunity to demonstrate the competencies that are characteristic of the pattern of practice of the specialty as operationally defined. The examination follows the validation of the education and training requirements at the generic and specialty levels. All examinations include an oral component focused upon a demonstration of practice in the specialty. In some specialties, the examination includes a written, knowledge-focused test. All examinations include review and exploration of the candidate’s practice samples.

The ABPP Specialty Examination Competency Model
The ABPP specialty examination model shall be the general model for specialty examinations.

The education, training, and experience qualify the candidate as prepared to demonstrate competency essential to the specialty. The demonstration component of the examination involves practice sample review, an oral examination process by certified specialists and—in some cases—a written examination, resulting in a decision to certify or not certify the candidate in the specialty.

A. Definition of the Specialty
Each specialty recognized by the ABPP must be distinctive and clearly defined in operational, competency terms which characterize the specialty (scope and pattern of practice, not education and training requirements).

The functional and foundational competencies are applicable to all specialties and specialist practice. The competencies are defined at varied levels (e.g., doctoral level, postdoctoral level). Competencies specific to
specialties are at the postdoctoral level. Doctoral levels of the competencies must be met, including the ABPP generic doctoral requirements and any particular requirements of the Specialty Board at the doctoral level.

Competencies are bifurcated as functional competencies and foundational competencies. Functional competencies are those day-to-day practice activities provided at the specialty specific level of practice. This is an advanced level of practice which defines the specialty. The six functional competencies of assessment; intervention; consultation, science base and application; supervision; management; and teaching are applicable to all specialist practice. Depending on the nature of the scope of practice, the functional competencies of supervision, management and teaching may be essential to define a specialist’s practice.

The foundational competencies are core foundations that cut-across the functional competencies – are part of all the functional competencies in varying degrees. Ethics and legal foundations, individual and cultural diversity, effective interpersonal interactions, and professional identification are part of all the functional competencies.

The functional and foundational competencies are defined below.

**Functional Competencies**

- **Assessment.** Defining, diagnosing, and conceptualizing problems and issues associated with individuals, groups, and/or organizations.
- **Intervention.** Developing, implementing, and evaluating interventions designed to produce positive change.
- **Consultation.** Providing expert guidance or professional assistance to a consultee’s needs or goals.
- **Science Base and Application.** Producing, consuming, or communicating scientific theory and knowledge relevant to areas of professional practice.
- **Supervision and Management.** The guidance, direction, and monitoring of trainees, residents, staff, or programs.
- **Teaching.** Formal teaching (including workshops, coursework, and presentations) related to the specialty.

**Foundational Competencies**

- **Ethics and Legal Foundations.** Awareness and application of appropriate ethical and legal practice requirements.
- **Individual and Cultural Diversity.** Awareness and sensitivity in working with diverse individuals, groups, and communities who represent various cultural and personal background and characteristics.
- **Interpersonal Interactions.** Ability to relate effectively and meaningfully with individuals, groups, and/or communities, and the ability to function effectively in interdisciplinary systems.
- **Professional Identification.** Practice conducted within the boundaries of competencies, including involvement in the profession and the specialty in particular. Continuing development as a psychologist specialist. Advocacy for the profession.

In effect, the ABPP Specialty Examination Competency Model starts with the functional definition of the specialty, followed by an operational definition of the specific, functional competencies characteristic of the specialty (key activities within the competency area). The foundational competencies are appropriately integrated across the functional competencies, for example, an awareness of individual and cultural diversity when assessing a client.

**Examination Procedures**

The examination includes a sample(s) of the candidate’s typical practice in the specialty which, upon review, is judged to be within the parameters of practice representative of the specialty. The oral examination involves an interactive evaluation of the practice sample and other examination procedures presented in an organized, sequential manner designed to evaluate the competencies characteristic of the specialty.
The examination is developed and implemented by each Specialty Board within the Standards of the ABPP. Specialty Boards may employ a wide range of examination procedures. The initial examination “package” of the Specialty Board is approved as part of the Specialty Board membership process and as modified during the monitored examination requirement. Thereafter, Specialty Board examinations are subject to periodic review by the Standards Committee or upon significant alterations or additions to the examination process (e.g., addition of a written examination or change to a station format examination).

The format of the examination must be explicitly designed both accounting for the sequence of examination events and the approximate time allocated to these events. The expected role of the candidate and examiners should be described. A detailed explanation should be clearly articulated in the Examination Manual.

Specialty Board examination manuals must conform to the current specialty examination manual template, the purpose of which is to improve the efficiency and coherence among the 13 different manuals required by the organization, and to ensure compliance with the ABPP standards.

There are a number of fundamental guidelines that have been part of the examination process over the years. These include:

• Adequate security and confidentiality of examination materials and outcomes.
• Fair and reasonable pass/fail rates.
• Candidates are provided summary feedback on examination performance. The feedback may be brief for pass decisions: more extensive for fail decisions. The latter should be specific, concise and relative to exam criteria—not behavioral response to the exam e.g., anxious. Pass notification letters are executed by the ABPP Executive Officer and, if desired, by the Specialty Board. Fail notification letters, which are authored by each Specialty Board, are first provided to the Executive Officer for review, editing, and possible legal review. In no instance may substantive changes be made in the Specialty Board decision by the Executive Officer. The Specialty Board (examination chair) provides a balanced summary of the decision to not grant certification, and this summary is attached to the “fail” letter.
• Examinations are regularly scheduled and are held in convenient locations whenever possible.
• The physical setting of the examination provides an appropriate environment for the examination (quiet, private, comfortable).
• Candidates are treated in a collegial manner and feedback to the candidate concerning the examination is part of the examination process.
• Accommodations are made consistent with the Americans with Disabilities Act.
• Specialty Board members having significant personal or professional relationships with candidates, as well as mentors of candidates, must recuse themselves from serving on examining teams involving such candidates.
• Proper informed consent is required for all examination procedures. See Policies and Procedures Section Z for requirements and suggestions related to informed consent and confidentiality.

**Examiner Selection and Training.** Examiners are selected and trained by the Specialty Board and examiner training should be described in the examiner manual. The majority of the examination team must be board certified in the specialty examined. Some specialties use only examiners in the specialty while other specialties (especially those more generalist in scope) employ examiners from a related specialty on the team. The chair of the examination team must be certified in the specialty examined. Depending upon the practice pattern of the candidate, particular expertise may be sought for a specific examination. However, examiners must be open to all legitimate “orientations” and are to avoid orientation disagreements, centering upon the candidate’s style and pattern of practice.

**Practice Samples.** The preparation of the practice sample is an important part of the examination process. Every effort should be extended to communicate clearly the practice sample requirements of the Specialty Board. Each specialty is required to describe in writing the practice sample requirements and process.
Written Examinations. A written examination is permissible, but not required. Care must be exercised in the adoption of a written examination so that the examination meets the requirements associated with psychological tests such as comparable forms, proper item selection and analysis, scoring and reporting procedures, reliability, validity, and explicit decision rules on their use. The development and final test product must be approved by the Standards Committee and the Board of Trustees.

The Senior Option in Examinations. The “senior” is defined as a specialist applicant/candidate with 15 or more years of experience following licensure. The ABPP has approved a policy allowing a continuing special option for “senior” specialists considered for certification. The essential rationale is to encourage experienced, often distinguished practitioners to take the examination, while recognizing longevity of experience and a more developed portfolio of practice in the specialty. There is no “senior examination” as such, but an option to flexibly apply past educational requirements and to modify practice sample submissions and some oral examination procedures.

There is one level of certification resulting from one examination, not a certified “distinguished” or “senior” descriptor. The criteria for a pass are the same for all candidates, allowing for individual differences of strengths and limitations expected of all candidates. See Policy and Procedures: Section M for more details on the Senior Option.

Examination Efficiency. The efficient use of resources is important to the examination process. Examiners should adhere to Central Office guidelines for travel and per/diem expenses. Reimbursement for expenses beyond those in the guidelines must be pre-approved by Central Office. Efforts should be made to use no-cost or low cost facilities that provide privacy, disability access, and adequate technical support.

Examination costs should not exceed the practice sample and oral examination fees combined and should be consistent with the requirements in the ABPP Financial Plan.

The standard of each Specialty Board managing its examination process within budget constraints is an important responsibility of all Specialty Boards with the Board of Trustees’ oversight.

V. Appeal Procedure

There are two levels of appeal, one at the Specialty Board level, the other at the Board of Trustee level.

Specialty Board Level

All Specialty Boards are to incorporate the requirement of ABPP Policy and Procedure L entitled, Appeal: Specialty Board Adverse Decision into the Specialty Board procedures. This appeal Policy and Procedure should be a written part of Specialty Board procedures as outlined in Policy and Procedures: L. Specialty Boards should “customize” the language with appropriate Specialty Board identifiers. Time-lines and reporting to Central Office should be observed carefully.

Board of Trustee Level

Candidates may appeal (Policy and Procedures: Section AC) to the Board of Trustees if there is an allegation that the Specialty Board did not follow its (Policy and Procedures: Section L) examination or appeal procedures. This is the final level of appeal.

VI. Maintenance of Board Certification

Board certified specialists must maintain certification on an annual basis in order to ensure to the public, the organization, and the profession that the specialist is currently in active practice of the specialty, is properly licensed or certified, or retired and is current with fees required by the organization. The annual attestation form
must be completed annually by board certified specialists and verified as meeting board certification maintenance requirements. Only board certified specialists and retired board certified specialists meeting these requirements will be listed in the ABPP (on-line) directory.

See the ABPP By-laws, Chapter 10 for details on the status of board certified specialists.

**VII. Guidelines for Representing Certification by the ABPP**

The ABPP confers certification upon the recommendation (and only that recommendation) by the Specialty Board. The “ABPP” certificate itself indicates the particular specialty. The “ABPP” is considered an earned credential and may follow the degree designation of the specialist. It is recommended that the specialty be designated in some manner following the ABPP designation to better inform the public and the profession. The manner of such specialty designations follows:

- To represent oneself as a specialist certified by the ABPP, the specialist must have currently met the ABPP maintenance requirements.

- The Board Certified Specialist shall not imply, or allow others to infer, that board certification status in one specialty indicates similar status in another specialty.

- The certificate should be reproduced only when a copy is needed for official records. The use of a reproduction of the certificate for display purposes or announcement of services is prohibited. Additional official certificates may be obtained from the ABPP Central Office.

- The designation of Board Certified Specialist status on letterhead or professional cards should include the highest degree and designations. (Example: John Doe, PsyD, Board Certified in Clinical Health Psychology, American Board of Professional Psychology). Designation of board certification in more than one specialty should follow format #7). Some examples of appropriate designations are listed below:

  1. John Doe, Ed.D., ABPP
  2. John Doe, Ph.D., ABPP-Clinical Psychology or ABPP (Clinical)
  3. Harry Doe, Psy.D., Board Certified in Cognitive and Behavioral Psychology, ABPP
  4. Sally Doe, Ph.D., Board Certified in Forensic Psychology, American Board of Professional Psychology
  5. Board Certified Specialists in more than one specialty may use the following options:
     a). Jane Doe Ed.D., ABPP certified in Clinical Psychology and certified in Clinical Child and Adolescent Psychology
     b). or the ABPP, above, may be placed following the last specialty designation
  6. Listing under a heading: Board Certified Specialists qualified by the American Board of Professional Psychology or similar heading may be used to accommodate one or more specialists.

ABPP may be spelled-out if desired. ABPP is a “brand name” which is readily recognized by the profession. Abbreviated designations of certification such as ABSaP or ABCP should not be used.

Designations such as “board eligible” or “candidate” are not recognized or approved by the ABPP.
Appendices

I. ABPP Generic Doctoral Program Eligibility Requirements
II. The Psychology Internship Program and Postdoctoral Supervision Requirements
III. ABPP Specialty Board Periodic Comprehensive Review Plan and Procedures
Appendix A

ABPP Generic Doctoral Program Eligibility Requirements

The following criteria define the generic educational requirements of a doctoral program in professional psychology. Education is used in the broad sense to include academic coursework, supervised practice, and related experiences.

1. Education in professional psychology is doctoral education offered in a regionally accredited institution of higher education.

2. The program may exist in a number of administrative arrangements, and it must be clearly identified and supported as a doctoral program in professional psychology. The program must specify in pertinent institutional catalogs and brochures its intent to educate professional psychologists.

3. The professional psychology program must stand as a recognizable, coherent organizational entity within the sponsoring institution.

4. There must be an evident organizational structure, and clear lines of authority, denoting responsibility for core components in the curriculum including the foundations of science and practice, the specialty areas of the program, and supervised practice requirements.

5. The program must be an integrated, organized sequence of educational and training experiences.

6. There must be a psychology faculty sufficient in number to implement the program and fully qualified to teach the science, practice, and specialty components of the curriculum.

7. There must be an identifiable body of matriculated students whose preparation is sufficient for an expectation of reasonable progress to program completion.

8. The program must include supervised practicum, internship and related experiences appropriate for supervised practice in the specialty offered.

9. The curriculum shall encompass at least three academic years of doctoral level graduate education including instruction in the following scientific and practice foundations of psychology:
   a. Biological aspects of behavior
   b. Social aspects of behavior
   c. Cognitive-affective aspects of behavior
   d. History and systems of psychology
   e. Psychology measurement
   f. Research methodology
   g. Techniques of data analysis
   h. Individual differences in behavior
   i. Human development
   j. Dysfunctional behavior or psychopathology
   k. Professional standards and ethics

10. Preparation for specialty practice also shall include instruction and supervised experience designed to develop functional competencies in:
    a. Assessment
    b. Intervention
    c. Consultation
    d. Science base and application
    e. Supervision and management
    And foundational competencies in:
    a. Ethics and legal foundations
    b. Individual and cultural diversity
    c. Interpersonal interactions
    d. Professional identification

11. Education, training, and supervised experience in the above functional and cross-cutting foundational competency areas should be sufficient to meet the doctoral level requirements of the specialty as established by each specialty board affiliated with the ABPP.
Appendix B
The Psychology Internship Program and Postdoctoral Supervision Requirements
(For use with individualized review)

Internship program requirements in professional psychology are integrated with the doctoral program and consist of the following criteria:

1. The Psychology Internship is an organized training program designed to provide the intern with a planned sequence of supervised practice experiences as a psychologist. The practice should be primarily broad and general, but secondarily may include specialty practice activities.
2. The internship program is directed by a psychologist licensed/certified at the independent level.
3. The internship program has at least two appropriate, licensed/certified psychologists assigned to supervise each intern. Each intern has a primary supervisor (or director) responsible for the intern’s training experience.
4. Supervision of the intern’s practice activities includes at least 2 hours per week of individual supervision by psychologists. Other professionals may augment that supervision.
5. Directed didactic activities, seminars, “in-service” education, state, local, national professional meetings, and similar activities are part of the internship program.
6. The internship program follows doctoral education (excepting the dissertation/scholarly project).

Postdoctoral supervised experience is required by all specialties.

1. Formal Postdoctoral Specialty Residency Programs accredited by the American Psychological Association are recognized as fulfilling postdoctoral specialty requirements with the exception of licensure
   a) Residents completing such accredited programs shall be qualified to apply for candidacy in a specialty when licensed at the independent practice level.
   b) It is the intent of the ABPP that Specialty Boards recognize the successful completion of the residency as expediting the specialty certification process, including the preparation of practice samples and completing written examinations (if required) near the end of the residency or immediately following the residency.
2. Postdoctoral supervised experience, appropriate to the particular specialty, is required for all specialties. When such supervised experience is not gained through an APA accredited residency program, the following requirements must be met.
   a) The postdoctoral residency program must meet the approval of the specialty.
   b) The postdoctoral supervision meets the approval of the specialty.
   c) Each specialty shall make public its criteria for non-APA residencies and postdoctoral supervision requirements.
Appendix C of Standards Manual
ABPP Specialty Board Periodic Comprehensive Review (PCR) Plan and Procedures

Introduction

The ABPP Standards for Specialty Board Certification assigns to the Standards Committee the responsibility for periodic reviews of specialty board activities, including a comprehensive review of the examination process as quoted below from the ABPP Standards Manual, Sections II.D.3 and 4, under the heading of Specialty Board Evaluation and Quality Enhancement:

“Each Specialty Board strives to improve its examination by self-study, objective study, awareness and application of state-of-the-art examination methods, training of examiners, and evaluation of its examination process.

Each Specialty Board is subject to a Periodic Comprehensive Review (PCR) every six years which includes an on-site visit of a SB Governance Meeting and observation of an examination session, conducted by the Executive Officer for ABPP and a representative of the Standards Committee. A written, focused Specialty Board self-study document shall be part of the process. A Periodic Comprehensive Review (PCR) report by the PCR site visit team, and a response to that report by the Specialty Board, shall be submitted to the Standards Committee who will make recommendations to the Board of Trustees for final review and any actions. The goal of the review is to evaluate total SB functioning and identify areas of possible improvement through a reasonable, manageable plan.

Purpose and Goals of the Periodic Comprehensive Review (PCR)

The overarching purpose of the PCR is to enhance specialty board goals and functioning with some depth of analysis, and to present a comprehensive, informative description of the specialty board to the ABPP governance (Board of Trustees).

Specific Goals

The four specific goals of the PCR Process are:

- to stimulate self-study toward continuous improvement of the specialty board activities,
- to assure that specialty board policies and processes are consistent with ABPP’s standards,
- to assure that each specialty board articulates its identity as a specialty,
- to communicate effectively about board certification in the specialty to the public.

The essential design of the PCR is a guided self-study incorporating available documentation and objective statistical data, governance organization and process, and the examination process. The written documentation required of each specialty board undergoing the PCR process, and time-lines for the self-study are described in the next section. These include a description of the specialty, recent specialty board statistics, current policies, procedures, and activities, as well as plans for future activities and initiatives. The procedures to accomplish the PCR involves a submission by the specialty board of all required written documentation and a subsequent site visit by a PCR review team that includes the Executive Officer and a representative from the Standards Committee.

Timeline for Periodic Reviews and PCR Site Visits

The BOT has directed the Standards Committee and the Executive Officer to initiate the specialty board review process according to the following schedule. Because all thirteen specialty boards cannot be reviewed in one or
even several years due to costs and limited resources, a six-year review cycle was developed, with two boards scheduled for review each year over the next five years (and three specialty boards reviewed in the sixth year). The sequence of the review parallel the sequence in which each of the boards became “member boards” of the ABPP. The review sequence is:

Yr. 2006 - 2007    Clinical and Counseling  
Yr. 2007 - 2008    School and Neuropsychology  
Yr. 2008 - 2009    Forensic and Family  
Yr. 2009 - 2010    Health and Cognitive Behavioral  
Yr. 2010 - 2011    Psychoanalysis and Rehabilitation  
Yr. 2011 - 2012    Group, Organizational & Business Consulting, and Child & Adolescent  
Yr. 2012 - 2013    The 13 specialty board cycle begins again

Implementation of the PCR Process and Required Documents

As previously described, the aims of PCR document submitted by each specialty board prior to its scheduled site visit is to provide a user-friendly and transparent document that defines and describes each specialty board’s identity as a specialty, activities, and examination process. The suggested sequence for organizing the PCR documents is provided at the end of this appendix. It is important to note that the ABPP Central office will be the primary resource for accessing recent statistics and other important documentation. Additionally, for boards that are using the self-study process as an opportunity to update brochures, manuals, websites, and examination materials, the ABPP Standards Committee has various template formats, and examples of completed documents from other specialty boards available to help each board through this work. These are available through the ABPP central office. Moreover, the Chair of the PCR site visit team serves as a resource for each specialty board, throughout the process and works with the specialty board president to coordinate the “site visit” to a specialty board governance meeting and a scheduled examination session. These on-site visits may occur with one integrated visit. Funding for the site visitors to visit each specialty board will be budgeted by the ABPP Board of Trustees. All specialty board costs will be assumed under the specialty board’s own budget. The written documentation for the PCR, should be sent to the central office, in either written or electronic format (or both), at least one month prior to the site visit. It should be noted that it is useful to consult with the site visit team, while preparing these documents to clarify any questions or to provide needed guidance.

A debriefing session will be scheduled at the end of each site visit, between the PCR site visit team and the specialty board members. Written feedback will be provided in the form of a site visit report and sent to the board within 30 days of the site visit. The board will have 30 days to respond to the site visit report and address all substantive issues. The executive summary of the original PCR written documentation (see below), the site visitors report, and the written response of the specialty board are reviewed by the ABPP Standards Committee, who make a recommendation to the ABPP Board of Trustees. The materials and the recommendations of the Standards Committee are reviewed by the Board of Trustees, who will vote upon the recommendations, which may be stated as one of the following:

a) reviewed and accepted without reservation;  
b) reviewed and accepted with changes suggested; or  
c) reviewed with changes required and a timeline

note: In the case of “c” the ABPP BOT will determine the course of action of a specialty board does not comply with requirements within the specified timeline.
The PCR Documentation: Requirements

It is required that the PCR report and written documentation be organized into the following five sections.

- PCR Executive Summary
- Administrative Documentation
- Candidate Documentation
- Examiner Documentation
- Marketing Materials

**Section 1: PCR Executive Summary** (At various points in this summary there can be references to relevant pages or sections of manuals or other key documents and information from these sources may “cut and pasted” from other materials).

- Board history and administrative overview
- Definition of the specialty
- Recent relevant statistics. Statistics should be reported for the last four years and include the number of oral exams given, number of people certified (passed), number not certified (failed), pass rate percentage, the number of candidates currently in the pipeline. For boards that have written exams, information on number of written exams given and passed and % passed should also be provided
- Highlights of current and near-future activities, committee activities and special initiatives, including marketing/recruitment include academy-related activities and web site information.
- Efforts related to individual and cultural diversity with regard to all aspects of the process (e.g., recruitment, examination, ABPP Diversity Task Force Survey)
- Process of examination from application to board certification (it may be useful to include a flow chart and the description of the process may be taken from the specialty board manual)
- Brief description of each phase of examination (this description may be taken from the specialty board manual)
- Brief description of mentor/reviewer/examiner training and quality assurance
- Review of strengths and weaknesses identified by self-study
- Plan of action based on self-study

**Section II: Administrative Documentation**

- Specialty Board Bylaws
- Specialty Board Affiliation Form
- Articles of Incorporation (if incorporated)
- List of board members, with names and contact information and office (website page)
- Sample correspondence letters (Pass, Not Pass)
- Minutes of last two board meetings
- Budgets (past year)

**Section III: Candidate Documentation**

- Candidate Manual (note if this is part of an overall manual)
- Application (generic application and any additional materials required for the specialty)
- Any candidate-oriented checklists (only need to provide if not in the Candidate Manual)
- Form for Candidate to rate the examination

**Section IV: Examiner Documentation**

- Examiner Manual (note if this is part of overall manual)
- Forms and worksheets used by examiners (note if part of manual)
- Examiner training materials (if applicable)

- **Section V: Marketing Materials**
  - Brochures (from board and Academy if applicable). If printed from the ABPP website, as well as the specialty board website, these should be checked carefully for accuracy
  - Website Information (The main address page should be printed out as well as any other pages of interest, that the specialty board would like the site visitors to be aware of.)

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