

# EXPERIENCE WAIVER AND POSTDOCTORAL TRAINING IN FORENSIC PSYCHOLOGY GUIDELINES

THE AMERICAN BOARD OF FORENSIC PSYCHOLOGY, INC. (ABFP)

(REVISED 09/18/2014)

## A. Experience Waiver

One thousand hours of experience in forensic psychology obtained over a 5-year period after the receipt of a doctoral degree are among the requirements for application for board certification in forensic psychology. However, ABFP offers waiver of the 5-year requirement for applicants who successfully complete a 2000-hour formal postdoctoral training program in forensic psychology that meets certain rigorous standards as described in C.2 *infra*. A request for this waiver is granted at the discretion of the Board on a case-by-case basis, applying ABFP's policy regarding such waiver.

## B. Application for Waiver Procedures

1. Applicants whose postdoctoral fellowship is included on [the list of postdoctoral training programs that have been determined to meet the standards described in C.2 \*infra\*](#) may apply for the waiver by submitting a copy of their program diploma or certificate of completion along with their specialty application materials. These materials are to be submitted to the American Board of Professional Psychology (ABPP). [Click here](#) for instructions about the ABPP and ABFP application process.
2. Applicants whose postdoctoral fellowship is not on [the list of accepted postdoctoral training programs](#) are not eligible for the experience waiver. However, they may request that their training director submit the required documentation as described in D.5 *infra* for program review.

## C. Review of Postdoctoral Training Programs in Forensic Psychology

1. Any postdoctoral fellowship accredited by the [American Psychological Association as a Specialty Practice Postdoctoral Resident Program in Forensic Psychology](#) will be automatically included on the list of accepted postdoctoral training programs for experience waiver.
2. For all postdoctoral fellowships that are *not* accredited by the American Psychological Association as a Specialty Practice Postdoctoral Resident Program in Forensic Psychology, the criteria for inclusion on the list of postdoctoral training programs accepted for experience waiver are as follows:

- a) The postdoctoral training program must be formally identified in all internal and external materials as a postdoctoral training program in forensic psychology.
- b) All Fellows participating in the program must have completed all doctoral degree requirements prior to beginning the training program.
- c) The program must have an identifiable training director who has one or more of the following:
  - i. ABPP certification as a specialist in forensic psychology
  - ii. At least 5 years of experience in forensic psychological practice
  - iii. Formal certification/sanctioning by the State in which he or she practices to conduct forensic psychological practice
- d) Postdoctoral Fellows (or equivalent title) must be identified as such in all formal communications with and on behalf of the program.
- e) Postdoctoral Fellows must be paid by stipend and must be considered trainees by the Fellowship. Fellows may not be paid on a fee-for-service basis.
- f) The program must offer a diploma or certificate upon completion of the postdoctoral training, clearly delineating the year(s) the fellow participated in the training program.
- g) The postdoctoral training program must have a structured written curriculum with clearly defined training goals and objectives overseen by the training director. Attendance at external seminars or workshops does not meet this criterion.
- h) The program must provide a formal didactic course or regular series of seminars that includes case law, ethics, and socio-cultural/ethnic factors in the context of forensic assessment and treatment.
- i) Fellows must complete 2000 hours of training in no less than 9 months and no more than 24 months (two years half-time).
- j) On-site supervision is required, and Fellows must receive a minimum of 2.0 hours of face-to-face supervision per week. Supervision must be provided by a licensed or state sanctioned/credentialed psychologist.
- k) Twenty-five percent of the Fellow's time (i.e., a minimum of 500 hours) must be spent in the direct provision of professional forensic psychological services (e.g., assessment, treatment, consultation).
- l) The program must have a formal written evaluation process that outlines the Fellow's progress during the postdoctoral year. These evaluations should identify the strengths and limitations of the Fellow's skills as a forensic psychologist.

#### **D. List of Accepted Postdoctoral Training Programs in Forensic Psychology**

1. The list of acceptable postdoctoral training programs is available on the [Forensic Psychology page](#) of the ABPP website.
2. Appearance on the list does not constitute endorsement or recommendation by ABFP.
3. Programs are granted a 5-year period of acceptance. Training directors are obligated to notify the ABFP Credential Review Officer if their program no longer meets the established criteria at any time during that period.
4. Training directors may pursue renewal of their acceptance designation no more than 1 year before its expiration by submitting a letter attesting that their program continues to meet the criteria as described in C.2 *supra*. The letter must be in electronic format and submitted to the ABFP Credential Review Officer whose name and contact information may be found on the [Forensic Psychology Officers page](#) of the ABPP website. Program renewal is granted at the discretion of the Board on a case-by-case basis for a 5-year period.
5. Applicants whose postdoctoral fellowship is *not* on the list of accepted postdoctoral training programs may request that their training director submit the required documentation as described below for program review. All material must be in electronic format and submitted to the ABFP Credential Review Officer whose name and contact information may be found on the [Forensic Psychology Officers page](#) of the ABPP website. The application packet *must* include the following:
  - a) A cover letter signed by the training director describing how *each* of the criteria set forth in C.2 *supra* has been met.
  - b) Copies of the Curriculum Vitae and current state licenses of the training director and all core faculty.
  - c) A link to the postdoctoral training program's website.
  - d) A copy of the postdoctoral training program's description in the current APPIC directory or an explanation of why the program is not a member of APPIC.
  - e) A statement indicating the year the postdoctoral training program began and the number of fellows who entered and completed the program for all ensuing years.
  - f) A copy of the postdoctoral training program's curriculum.
  - g) A sample of the diploma or certificate of completion that is awarded to Fellows.
  - h) A list of the number of hours required for completion of the postdoctoral fellowship and for each of the following:

- i. Hours of face-to-face supervision;
    - ii. Hours of formal didactic training; and
    - iii. Hours of direct provision of forensic psychological services.
  - i) A sample of the written evaluation provided to Fellows during or upon completion of the program.
6. Within 4 to 6 weeks of receiving the application materials, the training director will be informed as to whether the program was accepted. Program acceptance is granted at the discretion of the Board on a case-by-case basis. Programs that are determined to meet the criteria will be added to the list of postdoctoral training programs in forensic psychology accepted for experience waiver.

#### **E. AAFP Early Career Scholarship Program**

The Early Career Scholarship awarded by the American Academy of Forensic Psychology (AAFP) is designed to assist early career applicants seeking board certification in forensic psychology. The Scholarship is available to applicants applying for forensic board certification within two years of completing an ABFP approved postdoctoral fellowship in forensic psychology.

To receive the Scholarship,

1. The applicant must have completed a [postdoctoral fellowship in forensic psychology that has been determined to meet the standards described in C.2 supra](#) before applying for board certification. The application for board certification in forensic psychology must be filed with ABPP within 2 years of the date of completion of the postdoctoral fellowship.
2. Following notification of approval of forensic psychology specialty requirements, the Candidate contacts the AAFP President to inform him or her that the Candidate requests the Scholarship. The Candidate will provide the AAFP President a copy of the ABPP Candidate acceptance letter and a copy of the certificate of completion of the postdoctoral training program.
3. The AAFP Treasurer will provide the appropriate reimbursements to the Candidate upon successful completion/passing of each step in the examination process.
4. Four fees are potentially reimbursed: The ABPP application fee, the written examination fee, the practice sample fee, and the oral examination fee. The Candidate pays each of the four fees prior to each step in the examination process. Upon successful completion/passing of each step, the Candidate provides verification of payment to the AAFP Treasurer and the fee is reimbursed. Each fee is reimbursed once, for the first application only.