

## **SPECIALTY CERTIFICATION IN REHABILITATION PSYCHOLOGY**

### **AMERICAN BOARD OF REHABILITATION PSYCHOLOGY CERTIFICATION PROCESS MANUAL**

The American Board of Rehabilitation Psychology (ABRP) was incorporated in 1995 to conduct examinations leading to the Board Certification in Rehabilitation Psychology. ABRP emerged from early efforts by the Specialty Designation Committee of Division 22 (Rehabilitation Psychology) of the American Psychological Association. In 1997, ABRP became fully affiliated with the American Board of Professional Psychology (ABPP) and now operates as a member board of the ABPP.

### **CERTIFICATION IN REHABILITATION PSYCHOLOGY**

Board certification assures the public and the profession that the rehabilitation psychology specialist has successfully completed the educational, training, and experience requirements of the specialty, including an examination designed to assess the competencies required to provide quality services in rehabilitation psychology. Specialties, by definition, are advanced levels of practice that include doctoral and post-doctoral preparation. A description of the general doctoral and licensure requirements for certification follows, along with the additional requirements of the rehabilitation psychology specialty.

### **ELIGIBILITY FOR SPECIALTY CERTIFICATION IN REHABILITATION PSYCHOLOGY**

#### **General Eligibility Requirement**

To attain board certification in a specialty, an applicant must meet the general and the specialty eligibility requirements, which include:

- A doctoral degree from a program in professional psychology, which at the time the degree was granted, was accredited by the APA, CPA, or was listed in the publication Doctoral Psychology Programs Meeting Designation Criteria. Applicants credentialed in the most recent directory of the National Register of Health Service Providers in Psychology, the Canadian Register of Health Service Providers in Psychology, or the Certificate of Professional Qualification in Psychology (CPQ), (ASPPB) qualifying as meeting the doctoral degree requirements.
- Licensure or Certification at the independent practice level as a psychologist in the State, Province, or Territory in which the psychologist practices.

Note: Limited exceptions exist for prior to 1983 doctoral preparation, degrees granted outside the U.S. or Canada, formal retraining, substantial equivalents to accreditation requirements, and licensure in jurisdiction of practice for some Federal employees. Exception criteria and procedures are available from Central Office.

## **Specialty Specific Eligibility Requirements**

In addition to the above general requirements, each specialty requires appropriate education and training as the foundation for the specialty, and such post-doctoral preparation as necessary to meet the standards of the specialty. This includes a recognized internship program; and:

Two years of supervised practice in Rehabilitation Psychology which can be satisfied by:

- a. Two years of post-doctoral supervision, or
- b. One year of pre-doctoral and one year of post-doctoral supervision, or
- c. Completion of a recognized post-doctoral program in Rehabilitation Psychology.

At least three total years of experience in Rehabilitation Psychology, which can be satisfied by:

- a. Three years of clinical experience, one of which may be predoctoral internship with an emphasis in Rehabilitation Psychology, or
- b. One or two years of pre- and/or post-doctoral experience and successful completion of a recognized post-doctoral program in Rehabilitation Psychology.

## **DEFINITION OF REHABILITATION PSYCHOLOGY**

Rehabilitation psychology is that area of psychological practice concerned with assisting individuals with disabilities (congenital or acquired) in achieving optimal psychological, physical, and social functioning. Rehabilitation psychologists consider the entire network of biological, psychological, social, environmental, and political factors that affect the functioning of persons with disabilities. Rehabilitation psychologists are active in the areas of clinical practice, research, advocacy, administration, and education.

## **STANDARDS FOR BOARD CERTIFICATION**

Board certification assures the public and the profession that the specialist in rehabilitation psychology has met the education, training and experience requirements, as well as demonstrating the advanced competencies required by the specialty through an individualized, peer reviewed examination.

When the education, training and experience requirements described in the prior “Eligibility” section, the applicant is designated as a Candidate to move forward to the examination. The Application Form and related materials including the applicant’s doctoral program transcript serve as the information base of the common, generic degree requirements of the specialty. The application is reviewed by the ABPP Executive Officer for compliance with the generic requirements. Having met these requirements the specialty reviews the application to determine if the specialty’s specific requirements

have been met. The applicant is informed by the ABPP Central Office of the results of the application review.

Upon attaining candidacy the next step in the certification process is the examination, which consists of the practice sample and the oral examination. The examination reviews and examines candidates for the Key competencies characteristic of the specialty of rehabilitation psychology. The examination is based upon a review of the professional development of the candidate and a demonstration examination, which is designed to reflect the candidates practice at the specialty level. The candidate submits samples of his/her practice that, together with vignettes presented by the examiners and questions from the examination team of three certified specialists in rehabilitation psychology, constitute the oral examination.

The competencies examined follow, with the competencies that are required to be demonstrated during the oral examination marked by an asterisk (\*). Candidates should refer to the Competency Area when selecting and preparing practice samples. The competency areas are:

**\* = required**

**ASSESSMENT (all of the Assessment competencies listed are required)**

Adjustment to Disability: Patient\*

Adjustment to Disability: Family\*

Assessment of extent and nature of disability and preserved abilities\*

Assessment as it relates to educational and/or vocational capacities\*

Personality / emotional assessment\*

Cognitive testing\*

Competency evaluation\*

Sexual functioning assessment\*

Pain assessment\*

Substance use/abuse\*

Social and behavioral functioning assessment\*

**INTERVENTION**

*Required*

Individual therapeutic intervention as it relates to adjustment to disability\*

Family/couples therapeutic intervention as related to adjustment to disability\*

Behavioral Management\*

Sexual Counseling with disabled population(s)\*

*Supplemental*

Pain management

Cognitive retraining

Group therapeutic intervention as it relates to adjustment to disability

## **CONSULTATION (e.g., PT/OT/SLP, MD, RN, Voc, attorney, etc.)**

### *Required*

- Behavioral functioning improvement \*
- Cognitive Functioning\*
- Vocational and/or Education Considerations\*
- Personality / Emotional Factors \*
- Substance Abuse Identification and Management \*
- Sexual Functioning and Disability \*

### *Supplemental*

- Improvements in physical functioning
- Integration of assistive technology for enhancement of cognitive, sensory, and physical functioning

## **COMPETENCE IN CONSUMER PROTECTION**

### *Required*

- State laws of practice\*
- Laws related to and including ADA\*
- APA Ethical Principles\*
- Awareness and sensitivity to multicultural and diversity factors\*
- Issues related to patient confidentiality and privacy (e.g., HIPAA)\*

### *Supplemental*

- Advance directives/Wish to Die
- Abuse/Exploitation (sexual, financial, physical, psychological)
- Prevention e.g. Advocacy of legislative policy changes, Education
- Establishment of Standards of Care/Practice in Rehabilitation

## **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT COMPETENCE**

### *Required*

- Continuing education: must include documented CE credits in rehabilitation psychology areas within the previous 2 years.\*

### *Supplemental*

- Professional presentation - local, state, national levels
- Publications
- Teaching
- Involvement in advocacy groups
- Gain expertise in related sub-specialty areas (e.g., supervision, workshops)

### ***ALL REMAINING COMPETENCIES ARE SUPPLEMENTAL***

## **SUPERVISION COMPETENCE (all are supplemental)**

- Interns
- Post-Doctoral Residents
- Students
- Psychologists
- Other professionals as appropriate
- Programs

## **RESEARCH & INQUIRY COMPETENCE (all are supplemental)**

- Psychological, emotional and behavioral factors
- Intervention efficacy
- Assessment
- Adaptive/assistive technology
- Social psychology of disability
- Individual acute and long term adjustment to disability
- Family - acute and long term adjustment to disability
- Measurement of rehabilitation outcomes
- Life span issues as they relate to disabilities
- Injury prevention
- Sexuality and disability
- Ethnic and gender issues and disability
- Substance abuse and disability

Details of the certification process from the application/candidacy review through the examination (practice sample and oral examination) follow.

### **Application/Candidacy**

The Application Form (with fee of \$125) must be completed in full. Do not reference a vita, but complete all items on the application. The required endorsements must be part of (submitted with) the application. Membership in professional organizations that have identifiable purposes and policies that are congruent with those of ABRP is highly desirable. The application form can be obtained (as well as other fee/registration forms as the candidate moves forward in the process) from the ABPP Web site [www.abpp.org](http://www.abpp.org) going to Certification Process, then to Rehabilitation Psychology and click on Application to print the form.

The applicant should request that a copy of his/her doctoral program transcript be sent directly from the educational institution to the ABPP Central Office. ABPP shall verify your licensure and professional standing (disciplinary data base status).

For Rehabilitation Psychology, a total of 4 individual endorsements must be submitted. These include two supervisory endorsements and two other professional endorsements.

### **Practice Sample Overview/Requirements**

When an applicant is notified that his/her credentials are complete and satisfactory, he/she is advanced to the status of Candidate and a Practice Sample is required. A period of one year from the date of such notification is allowed for the candidate to submit an acceptable Practice Sample. Should the candidate fail to submit a satisfactory Practice Sample within the one year period, the application will be considered to have lapsed. After an application has lapsed, any further action requires that an entirely new set of

application materials be submitted, including additional fees based on the fee structure in effect at that time. Thus, it is important that an application be made with consideration of the time frame within which the Practice Sample is due.

### **SUBJECT MATTER OF THE PRACTICE SAMPLE**

A Practice Sample consists of two (2) examples of the Candidate's current or recent practice in Rehabilitation Psychology. The fundamental purpose of the Practice Sample is to demonstrate that the Candidate's activity incorporates principles and practices of Rehabilitation Psychology at a specialist level.

Given the variety of practice settings and activities of Rehabilitation Psychologists, it is not possible to supply an exhaustive list of acceptable forms or content of the Practice Sample. However, the following types of submissions are acceptable: clinical reports; descriptions of consultations with attorneys, vocational counselors, schools, or other third parties; teaching curricula; research publications; program or instrument development; other administrative materials.

Both portions of the Practice Sample should have clear relevance to the field of Rehabilitation Psychology and should offer evidence that the Candidate is practicing Rehabilitation Psychology at a specialist level.

In order to offer a balanced and comprehensive picture of the Candidate's expertise in Rehabilitation Psychology, it is important that the two portions of the Practice Sample be sufficiently different to demonstrate breadth of experience and expertise. For example, if a Candidate submits two case reports, it is preferable that these not concern two persons with spinal cord injury or two with traumatic brain injury. At least one of the two portions of the Practice Sample must be a clinically focused case. The second part of the Practice Sample may have a teaching, research, administrative, or other clinical focus.

### **The Senior Candidate: Practice Sample Option**

An applicant with 15 years or more experience following licensure qualifies as a "senior candidate". The senior candidate may elect to not submit a clinical case report for either of the two required practice samples, but may submit practice samples representing his/her extended experience in research, administration, teaching/supervision, program administration or evaluation, and so on, related to rehabilitation psychology. These samples should be clearly labeled "Senior Option" to distinguish them as such

### **FORMAT OF THE PRACTICE SAMPLE**

Practice Sample material may include consultation reports, clinical notes, summaries, treatment protocols, grant proposals, program descriptions, teaching curricula, video tape, audio tape, case reports, and/or publications. The two (2) portions of the Practice Sample are not to exceed a total of 50 double-spaced typewritten pages or 60 minutes of either

audio or videotape.

**Suggested Format of the Practice Sample:**

- I. Introduction (1-2 pages)
  - a. Description of candidate's work setting
  - b. Competencies addressed in practice sample
  - c. Abstract of cases
- II. Case 1 (follow this format for each case)
  - a. Overview of case
  - b. Narrative of case
  - c. Outcome of case, emphasizing how candidate impacted the outcome
  - d. Explanation/justification for limitations in the case
- III. Supporting materials for Case 1
  - a. Chart notes; letters; test results; (patient de-identified; HIPAA compliant);
  - b. References
- IV. Case 2 (follow above format)
- V. Supporting materials for Case 2 (follow above format)

Please carefully proofread your final document for spelling, grammar, and clarity. Also, please format the narrative and references in accordance with APA style where possible.

Each of the two (2) portions of the Practice Sample must be bound separately. FOUR (4) COPIES of each portion of the Practice Sample should be sent to the Corresponding Secretary and the fee/registration form (with \$250 fee) to the ABPP Central Office. Candidates should also keep one complete copy of the Practice Sample. The Corresponding Secretary will review submitted materials to ensure that they are complete and in acceptable form. The Corresponding Secretary may request revisions before the materials are distributed to the Practice Sample Review Committee.

A mentor is available to the candidate. Although not a requirement, candidates are strongly encouraged to utilize their mentor during the practice sample selection and write-up process. Practice samples should reflect the Candidate's usual practice of rehabilitation psychology. A committee comprised of three ABPP Certified Specialists in Rehabilitation Psychology reviews the practice sample. Upon final acceptance of the practice samples, including any requested revisions, the Candidate then moves to the oral examination.

The Secretary sends the results of the review for acceptance of the Practice Sample to the ABPP Central Office who notifies the candidate of the results of the review.

**Oral Examination**

The Oral Examination can be scheduled following acceptance of the practice samples. The notification letter of acceptance explains the necessary steps to register for the oral examination and includes the fee/registration form (with \$450 fee), which must be sent to the ABPP Central Office before the oral examination can be scheduled.

The candidate typically sits for the next available oral examination. Oral exams are conducted 1 or 2 times per year, in various locations. The previously described competencies are the focus throughout the oral examination. The oral exam in rehabilitation psychology consists of 4 parts. For the first two parts of the exam, the candidate reviews a number of clinical vignettes that have been selected by the board, and selects two for examination. After reading the case materials, the candidate meets with the first examiner and is examined on the vignette. The goal of this exercise is to evaluate the candidate's ability to investigate the areas relevant to the vignette, draw reasonable conclusions based upon the information available and develop appropriate treatment interventions or planning. It is not crucial that the candidate reaches the same conclusions as the preparer of the vignette; it is only crucial that the candidate's conclusions be reasonable and defensible on the basis of the data available in the vignette record. The candidate then proceeds to the second examiner for examination on the second vignette. With the third examiner, candidates are examined on their practice sample. The practice sample serves as a base from which to review the candidate's pattern of practice as a rehabilitation psychologist, including theoretical, empirical, and practical foundations. Finally, the Candidate is examined on ethical and legal issues related to rehabilitation. This is accomplished primarily through the discussion of several vignettes, each of which presents various ethical considerations. In addition, the Candidate's knowledge and ability to apply the requirements of Americans with Disabilities Act is examined.

Following the oral examination the examination team returns the practice materials to the candidates. The candidate is then dismissed and the team discusses the candidate's response and ratings to the examination and votes to confer or not confer certification. If the vote is negative the candidate may appeal the decision based upon procedural grounds only by notifying the Board within 30 days of his/her intent to appeal. The Board forwards appeals procedures to the candidate. If the vote is to confer certification, the certified specialist is notified of the pass by the ABPP Executive Officer immediately upon notification of the recommendation (via Fax) to Central Office from the Oral Examination Chair.

The Diploma is forwarded to the newly board certified specialist within 45 days following notification.

## **QUALIFIED INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES**

### **Recommended Statement**

A. The Board encourages qualified individuals with disabilities to apply for Specialty Board status. The board recognizes that these individuals may encounter unusual difficulties and will make efforts to provide reasonable accommodations for these applicants. The board will consider individual request for accommodations by qualified individuals with disabilities.

A qualified individual with disabilities can request reasonable accommodation, must

formalize the request with the board, and support the request with documentation confirming a need for reasonable accommodation and the basis of the need.

At the request of the board, applicants with special needs should be ready to document the need consistent with the applicable guidelines, and assist the board in developing reasonable accommodations, as applicable. In its sole discretion, the board will either grant or deny the request based on applicable guidelines.

B. General procedures and individual case-by-case guidelines will also be developed.

## **INSTRUCTIONS FOR APPLYING FOR BOARD CERTIFICATION**

1. Complete the enclosed application.
2. Please note that the application requires submission of a copy of your current state or provincial psychology certificate/license.
3. Please have an official copy of your Doctoral graduates school transcripts sent directly to the ABPP Central Office.
4. Rating Forms (to be forwarded to the ABPP Central Office) from two supervisors, and two or three colleagues or peers, each of whom can attest to the nature, extent and quality of your experience and competence in rehabilitation psychology are required. Supervisors are expected to comment on the nature (clinical versus administrative) and length of supervision. These forms are included in the application.
5. Endorsement forms are required from at least two colleagues who are aware of the scope of your training and current functioning. These forms are included with your application and should be submitted to the ABPP Central Office with your completed application.