

EXAMINATION PREPARATION MANUAL

FOR

**BOARD CERTIFICATION IN ORGANIZATION AND BUSINESS
CONSULTING PSYCHOLOGY**

BY

The American Board of Organizational and Business Consulting Psychology, Inc.
600 Market Street, Suite 300, Chapel Hill, NC 27516
Tel: 919-537-8031 Fax: 919-537-8034
www.abpp.org

SPECIALTY BOARD CERTIFICATION BY THE ABPP

Purposes and Aims

The American Board of Professional Psychology, Inc. was originally incorporated as the American Board of Examiners in Professional Psychology in 1947. According to its current Bylaws:

The purposes and goals of the Corporation are:

- a) To serve the public and the profession by certifying that psychologists in various specialty areas of psychology have completed the educational, training and experience requirements of a specialty, including an examination designed to assess the competencies required to provide quality services in the specialty, and who maintain high ethical standards.
- b) To function as a unitary organization of affiliated, incorporated specialty boards through a Board of Trustees, which includes representation from its Member Boards and the public.
- c) To establish and monitor standards of specialty board certification in psychology and through its affiliated specialty boards support the development, validation, and administration of qualifications and examinations leading to certification in a specialty area recognized by the Corporation.
- d) To maintain a central registry for the public dissemination of information about the board certification status of all those psychologists certified by Member Boards.
- e) To establish relationships with the public and the profession, particularly organizations that identify psychologists as providers of service with board certified credentials.
- f) To assist in improving the quality of research, education and training in specialties of professional psychology, including those approving programs for specialties.
- g) To conduct information and education programs designed to make information about the specialty certification process and the status of its board certified psychologists available to the public and the profession.

The Board certifies specialists in thirteen areas of professional practice, namely; Clinical Psychology, Clinical Child and Adolescent Psychology, Clinical Health Psychology, Clinical Neuropsychology, Cognitive and Behavioral Psychology, Counseling Psychology, Family Psychology, Forensic Psychology, Group Psychology, Organizational and Business Consulting Psychology, Psychoanalysis in Psychology, Rehabilitation Psychology, and School Psychology.

The Specialty of Organizational and Business Consulting Psychology (OBCP)

The ABPP has been certifying Industrial/Organizational psychologist specialists for over 50 years. However, over the past decade less than a half-dozen I/O diplomas have been conferred and the I/O board of the ABPP was dissolved. However, practitioners in the field with varied postdoctoral experience, education and training and often with broader, new directions in practice, displayed much interest in a redefined specialty area, which best may be described as practice in organizational and business settings.

Upon the initiative of the ABPP and some I/O Diplomates, a restructured specialty and specialty board have been established to certify specialists in **Organizational and Business Consulting Psychology** by a new nascent **American Board of**

Organizational and Business Consulting Psychology (ABOBCP), a member board of the ABPP.

The specialty of organizational and business consulting psychology is defined as the practice of psychology applied to organizational entities, especially business settings. The practice modality of the specialty is primarily one of consultation and developmental support for organizations in order to improve their effectiveness based upon the discipline and profession of psychology. Typical areas of practice include organizational training and development, organizational effectiveness, assessment, selection, placement, and performance measurement in organizations, consumer analysis, human performance in complex person-machine systems, and other emerging areas of practice in the specialty.

Board certification in OBCP is for the **practice** of the specialty, not solely a role as an academic/research psychologist.

To be eligible for certification the applicant must be **“licensed”** at the as a psychologist for independent practice at the doctoral level in a jurisdiction in the U.S., its territories or Canada. Further, the applicant must meet the discipline of psychology’s educational foundations or generic requirements and the essential or specific requirements of the specialty. The generic and specialty requirements follow:

Generic Requirements

- 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 or Canadian Register of Health Service Providers in Psychology quality as meeting the doctoral degree requirements as well as those holding the Certificate of Professional Qualification Psychology (CPQ)
- All ABPP candidates in the U.S., its territories or Canada must be licensed as a psychologist for independent practice at the doctoral level in a jurisdiction in the U.S., its territories or Canada.

Specialty Specific Requirements

A. Internship (or closely supervised equivalent experience)

Requirements for OBCP: A completed Application for Specialty Certification in Organizational and Business Consulting Psychology is required.

The internship year (or 2 half years) is considered part of the requirements for the doctoral degree in many areas of psychology and is acceptable. The ABOBCP recognizes that an OBCP specialist may not have completed an internship in a health service setting, but rather have the equivalent years of supervised experience in setting(s) appropriate for preparation in the specialty.

**PRACTICE AREAS AND ACTIVITIES FOR THE PREPARATION OF
PRACTICE SAMPLE AND ORAL EXAMINATION**

The OBCP Practice Areas and Activities for the Preparation of Practice Sample and Oral Examination follow in (a) through (f). A 7th area, (g) may be proposed by the applicant but must be approved by the examination chair. The applicant must provide evidence such as academic coursework or equivalent continuing education, or retraining, and postdoctoral supervised experience, in the 3 (or 2 for senior option) selected areas of practice.

Practice Areas Characteristic of the Specialty

- (a) **Assessment, selection, placement, and performance measurement**
developing assessment tools for selection/placement/classification
promotion
validating test instruments
job analysis and job evaluation
developing and implementing selection procedures
identifying management potential
evaluating organizational effectiveness
individual psychological assessment
group, team assessment
developing performance management systems
job accommodation
other (specify) _____
- (b) **Training and development**
identifying training and development needs
formulating and implementing technical training
formulating and implementing management development programs
evaluating the effectiveness of training and development programs
other (specify) _____
- (c) **Organizational psychology**
project management, leadership
identifying leadership patterns, facilitating leadership processes,
developing leadership skills
developing programs to enhance motivation to work
assessing and improving work related attitudes, climate, culture,
satisfaction analyzing and promoting effectiveness of small group
behavior in organizations
other (specify) _____
- (d) **Organization development**
process consultation
designing, undertaking organizational interventions
leading team building, development activities
executive, management out placement
executive, management recruitment
analyzing organization structure
maximizing the effectiveness of work groups and organizations

assessing needs and facilitating organization change, change management
enhancing the productive outputs of individuals
redesigning jobs
analyzing socio-technical systems and recommending and implementing change
coaching, individual, executive, job
other (specify)_____

(e) **Consumer psychology**
assessing consumer preferences
identifying consumer reactions to new products
developing market segmentation strategies
designing packaging
studying economic behavior
other (specify)_____

(f) **Engineering psychology**
studying skilled human performance in complex person-machine systems
designing work environments
optimizing person-machine effectiveness
developing systems technologies
evaluating processes of problem solving, decision making, and control of complex environment
other (specify)_____

(g) **Other area of specialty relevant practice (specify)**_____

B. **Years of Experience**

The applicant will have the equivalent of five years (1,500 hours each) of full-time experience in the practice of organizational, industrial, business, and business-consulting psychology; at least four years of which will be postdoctoral experience. Qualifying experience includes practice in any 3 or more (2 or more for senior option) of the seven (7) areas (a-g) listed previously.

The Board recognizes that a candidate may not have been engaged full time in the actual practice of his or her area of specialization. Part-time experience, such as teaching, consulting, research and supervision, qualify if these activities are in the specialty in which the candidate seeks the diploma, and provided the candidate devotes a significant amount of time to professional practice in this specialty.

An application with a description of his or her specialty specific experience will be submitted.

C. Supervision

The applicant will show as part of their four years of postdoctoral experience, that he or she has experienced a total of at least two years of supervision or equivalent collegial relationship in the postdoctoral practice of organizational, industrial, business, business-consulting psychology. The supervisors or colleagues shall be individuals holding the diploma in this specialty area, or someone with substantial expertise in the practice of this specialty.

Experience of independent private practice will be accepted as qualifying for the five years experience requirement only if preceded by two years of experience under professional supervision or in a close collegial relationship where the candidate's work is subject to review by a qualified psychologist.

D. Continuing Education and Professional Commitment

The candidate must show evidence of continuing education which might include, but not be limited to, attendance at professional meetings, seminars, and formal courses in the profession of psychology during the postdoctoral years. Typically, a minimum of 16 hours per year would be expected.

Professional commitment might include active membership in professional organizations such as APA, APS, Divisions 13 and 14, conducting professional examinations, addressing student groups, etc.

E. The Senior Option

For those applicants who have 15 years of relevant postdoctoral experience in this specialty, certain **procedural options** are available if the applicant wishes to use them. "Senior" applicants often bring more specific, in depth, focused practice to the examination. As a result, more flexibility is needed for a review of practice samples of seniors, often including publications and special projects. For applicants qualifying for the senior option:

1. A wider range of practice samples will be acceptable. These may include a portfolio of publications, research grants, award presentations, advanced training activity, others. The sample or samples must clearly demonstrate advanced competence as a practitioner and be approved by an ABOBCP representative.
2. Due to a more extensive education/experience history, 3b may be used for reporting experience/supervision instead of 3a in the SPECIALTY BOARD CERTIFICATION IN ORGANIZATIONAL AND BUSINESS CONSULTING PSYCHOLOGY section.

F. The ABOBCP Practice Sample

The purpose of these guidelines is to assist you with the preparation of your practice sample, which will be reviewed as a major part of your examination. A practice sample is an example of your current work or work completed within the last two years, with the exception of the senior option, which allows practice samples representing a longer career line.

1. **Rationale.** Review of your practice sample is an integral part of the examination and credentialing process (ABOBCP). The examination committee will review the practice sample when it is submitted, and use it as a springboard for portions of the oral examination. Therefore, it is essential that you submit a carefully prepared, representative, sample of your work as a specialist practitioner.

The practice sample may take many different forms, but must provide materials that allow the examiners, except for the senior option, to assess your proficiencies in the following areas: diagnose a problem, carry out an appropriate intervention, evaluate the effectiveness of the intervention, recognize and deal with relevant ethical and professional issues

2. **Submission of the practice sample.** When you have been notified that your credentials are complete and that you have been accepted as a candidate for examination, a practice sample will be requested. You should prepare four copies. You will be advised by the ABPP Central Office where to send them for review.

After acceptance to candidacy, you have one calendar year to submit the copies of your practice sample.

After they are submitted, an ABOBCP representative will evaluate the materials. Only if he/she judges the sample to be acceptable for the examination will the oral examination be scheduled.

If the first submission of the practice sample is judged to be unacceptable for the examination, your ABOBCP representative will assist you to make it ready for examination, or suggest you submit an alternative.

3. **Quality of practice sample submitted.** Generally, your practice sample should provide as much information as necessary for a colleague, after inquiry and deliberation during the oral examination, to judge whether your work is of advanced competence in applying the core principles of the field.

G. The ABOBCP Examination

The ABOBCP Examination, typically held twice a year, is designed to reflect and implement the policies and procedures of ABPP and this specialty. Following admission to candidacy and submission of appropriate practice sample(s), ABOBCP appoints an examination committee. The committee consists of three or more Diplomates; at least one of who shares an orientation, approach, and experience in professional practice similar to that of the candidate. The Chair of the committee is an experienced senior examiner. The structure and content of the exam is as follows:

1. **Review of practice sample.** A detailed discussion of the candidate's practice sample will be conducted. With the possible exception of "senior" candidates, questions will cover identification and formulation of the problem, assessment of the situation, design and implementation of data collection or other relevant procedures, analysis and interpretation of information, formulation of conclusions or recommendations, the intervention or action taken, evaluation of results and/or other follow-up activities, and awareness and handling of relevant ethical, professional, or legal issues.

2. **Content examination.** Prior to the examination, the candidate will have indicated his/her choice of at least three areas (2 for senior option) from the seven Specialty Specific Requirements. These areas, noted (pp 3-4, a-g) on a separate form submitted with the practice sample, will then comprise the science base and content domain for the examination. The candidate may be questioned on any of these topic areas; they will not necessarily all be represented or represented equally.
3. **Ethical issues.** The examination will cover the candidate's familiarity with relevant codified ethical principals (e.g., APA), legal standards and their applicability to professional specialty practice. This will be assessed, in part, by an evaluation of the candidate's responses to two or more ethical case vignettes presented during the examination. Competence in this realm will also be assessed, in part, by the candidate's presentation of the ethical implications, if any, of the practice sample.
4. **Final assessment of the candidate.** The committee will discuss the candidate's general and specialty specific professional identification, and where appropriate, competency in consultation and supervision. After completion of the entire examination, the candidate will be evaluated independently by each of the examiners on the extent to which he or she demonstrates advanced competency in this specialty. A final determination of pass/no pass will be made by a majority vote of the examiners.

Notification of award of the diploma. Each candidate will receive formal notification of the Board's judgment within 30 days of the examination. Unsuccessful candidates may request a second examination within one year. A completely new committee will be formed and an additional \$450 examination fee charged. If the examination has been twice taken unsuccessfully, the candidate must wait three years before reapplying for a third and final examination. Evidence of continuing education in the candidate's area of practice may be required before the third examination can be scheduled.

SUMMARY OF THE CERTIFICATION PROCESS

Application and Admission to Candidacy

When a psychologist believes he or/she meets the specialty's requirements, he or she may apply for candidacy.

Upon submission of the application, the applicant should request that official graduate transcripts be sent directly to the ABPP Central Office.

Any letters of recommendation or endorsement are to be submitted to the ABPP Central Office along with the application.

When all the necessary documents have been received, the Executive Officer conducts whatever investigation seems necessary to provide appropriate information for review and appraisal. This includes sending an inquiry to the State or Provincial Board of Examiners of Psychologists. When all credentials have been assembled, the Board will seek, on the basis of the record, clear evidence that the applicant meets its standards in accordance with the following criteria:

1. Licensure or certification as a psychologist at the independent practice level.
2. Meets the generic educational requirements.
3. Meets the essential or specific requirements of the specialty.

When the Board determines that the applicant has met its qualifying standards, he or she will be considered a Candidate and will be notified of admission to candidacy.

Note to foreign or foreign-trained applicants: The Board does not accept applications from individuals who are internationally trained and who practice outside the U. S. or Canada.

The Examination Committee

The ABPP Examination is conducted by a committee of board certified examiners. Candidates should expect to be examined broadly in their area of practice. The examination committee will not include any person who has had substantial personal or professional contact with the candidate.

The ABPP Examination

The ABPP Examination is designed to judge competence at the specialist level in the areas of the candidate's professional practice. It will cover the following interrelated areas:

The Effectiveness of the Candidate's Efforts Toward Constructive Intervention Based on Realistic Assessment of the Problem Presented:

The Board recognizes that professional psychologists use a variety of approaches, techniques, and theoretical orientations.

The Consultation Competency as it relates to the OBCP specialty and the candidates practice.

Awareness of the Relevance of Research and Theory:

It is assumed that a professional psychologist is continually aware of scientific and scholarly developments in order to infuse his or her practice with the most valid and reliable data that the science provides.

The purpose of this aspect of the examination is to ascertain whether the candidate can present and discuss critically the implications and applications of contemporary psychological knowledge in his or her area of practice.

Sensitivity to the Ethical Implications of Professional Practice:

A professional psychologist is expected to be aware of: (1) the ethical principles adopted by the profession and (2) the implications of these in practice, including the responsibility of practicing in the best interest of clients and society.

Notification and Award of Diploma

Each Candidate will receive formal notification of the Board's judgment within 30 days of the examination. Diplomas will either be conferred on successful candidates at a convocation held during the annual convention of the American Psychological Association or will be sent to the new Board Certified Specialist by mail within a reasonable time after the convocation. An explanation of reasons for failure will be supplied to each unsuccessful candidate in order to guide further professional development.

Policies Concerning Candidacy and Examination

The Board expects that the conditions of each examination will be consistent with the principles and standards stated in the examination manual. Recognizing that exceptions may occur, the Board has a procedure for appeals. If a candidate believes that the examination was not conducted in accord with the Board's examination procedures, he or she may request an appeal. Such request should be submitted within 30 days of a no award of certification notice. It shall include a specific statement of factors and conditions considered by the candidate as inconsistent with the board's examination procedures. Such a Board review may have two possible outcomes: (1) nullification of the examination, or (2) a confirmation of the No Award decision. A candidate cannot be awarded the diplomas as a result of the review.

Professional Affiliations and Standards of Practice

The Board may suspend action on any candidate being investigated by the Ethics Committee of the American Psychological Association or by a state board of examiners of psychologists, and/or by the ABPP Ethics Committee.

The Board may initiate procedures to revoke the Diploma of an individual if it is presented with information indicating that the person may have committed misconduct subject to the Ethics Rules and Procedures. The Board does not acknowledge the term, "Board Eligible." Any use of the term, "Board Eligible," by those who have been admitted to candidacy for the examination, or others, is inappropriate.

Annual Fees

Candidates who pass the examination are Board certified in their specialty. They will be required to pay an annual fee until they have retired from all practice of psychology. Fees are currently set at \$185 per year; \$50 for retired Diplomates.

Application Periods

Applications are accepted throughout the year. Registration for examination should take place within a year of admission to candidacy. Short extensions may be obtained by written request from ABPP's Executive Officer

Schedule of Fees

The total fee for application, evaluation and award of the diploma is payable as follows:

Application \$125
Practice Sample Review Fee \$250
Oral Examination Fee \$450

The Board reserves the right to change its schedule of fees at any time during the course of candidacy. **Fees are not refundable.**

Inquiries concerning candidacy and requests for further information should be sent to:

American Board of Professional Psychology, Inc.
600 Market Street, Suite 300
Chapel Hill, NC 27516
919-537-8031
www.abpp.org

Summary of Steps in the ABOBCP Process

1. Complete and return an application with \$125 application fee.
2. The endorsers or letters of reference should be included when the application is submitted to the ABPP Central Office.
3. Have transcripts from all graduate institutions sent to ABPP Central Office.
4. The applicant is notified whether or not he/she has met the candidacy requirements.
5. Following notification of candidacy, the candidate will be asked to complete and submit **four copies** of the practice samples, together with a \$250 practice sample review fee. Submitted with the practice samples will be a form PRACTICE AREAS AND ACTIVITIES FOR THE PREPARATION OF PRACTICE SAMPLES AND ORAL EXAMINATION which guides ABOBCP in developing an appropriate committee and establishing the content domains for the oral exam.
6. An ABOBCP representative and mentor for the examination process will contact the candidate about the adequacy of their sample. Potential times for the examination will be established. A \$450 examination fee will be required.
7. Sit for the 3-4 hour oral examination.
8. ABPP will notify the candidate of exam results within 30 days.

[Printer Friendly Version](#)