

### **PROFESSIONAL SELF-STUDY STATEMENT (PSS)**

The PSS is designed to encourage self-examination, enable demonstration of professional maturity, and provide the context in which the candidates will present an explicit and coherent rationale for their work in Geropsychology. It is intended to be a description of a Candidate's professional activities, practices, challenges, and accomplishments, and it should explain and document his or her evolution as a professional, including the Candidate's views and beliefs central to his or her primary domain(s) of practice as well as his or her attunement to ethical, professional, and diversity issues.

The PSS provides an avenue for candidates to look at what has informed their practice, what has shaped them developmentally as psychologists, the biases they bring to their work, and how they evaluate their work (Davidson, 2009). The PSS should describe a Candidate's development as a specialist by examining the major influences, both personal and theoretical, for his or her work. In addition, specific academic, supervisory, or personal experiences that have led candidates to the beliefs and skills they bring to the certification process should be reflected in their PSS. Candidates also need to demonstrate their awareness of, and sensitivity to, multiculturalism and diversity as they impact their specialty services. Diversity includes race, ethnicity, gender, age, sexual orientation, class, and religion; physical and psychological challenges, geographic region of birth and rearing, as well as current residence, linguistic facility, and history.

Although it is not expected that all candidates—whether Traditional or Senior Option—contribute to the scientific literature, candidates should discuss how scientific evidence informs their practices as they formulate and evaluate the work that they do. Candidates who have conducted their own specialty-relevant research should discuss the ways that their research activities inform their practice of Geropsychology.

The PSS is one of two written documents through which the Candidate demonstrates competence in the entire specialty area. Recognizing that most Geropsychologists concentrate their practice activities in one (or several) functional domains but rarely practice equally across all three functional domains of Assessment, Intervention and Consultation, the PSS provides the opportunity for the Candidate to demonstrate conversant knowledge and competence in those areas that may not be a primary focus of practice. For example, a Candidate who practices primarily in the assessment domain should describe how his or her assessment activities with older adults may be used to facilitate treatment with their older clients (Intervention domain). As another example, the intervention-focused Candidate will be expected to discuss how treatment activities bear on Consultation practice.

The PSS must address each of the following items as organized below and using the below-listed headings:

The PSS is designed to enable the Applicant to demonstrate a high level of professional maturity and the ability to articulate an explicit and coherent rationale for his or her work in Geropsychology. In contrast, the Practice Sample portion is intended to permit the Applicant to demonstrate a requisite level of competence within the specialty. The PSS and Work Examples must be submitted within one year from the date of approval of the application.

#### **PSS - specifics**

The PSS is designed to be a description of the Applicant's professional activities, practices, challenges and accomplishments. This statement must address, in separate sections, each of the following items:

**A. Professional Activities:**

Please describe your professional work, past and current, both within the specialty of Geropsychology and in other areas of professional practice. Include a description of your experience providing services in the Assessment, Intervention, and/or Consultation domains (such a description might include a self- review of your geropsychology competencies via self-administration of the Pikes Peak Geropsychology Knowledge and Skill Assessment Tool). Also, please include a brief statement describing your reasons for wishing to seek board certification.

**B. Professional Development:**

Describe your development as a Geropsychology specialist by examining the major influences, both personal and theoretical, for your work. In addition, discuss specific academic, training, supervisory, or personal experiences that have led you to the beliefs and skills you bring as a Geropsychologist to the certification process.

**C. Services to the Profession:**

Description of the services and activities you have provided to the profession of psychology in general, as well as services and activities related specifically to Geropsychology (e.g., participation in aging associations or committees, presentations at gerontological conferences, consultation at the local, state, or national level).

**D. Continuing Education:**

Description of the APA-approved continuing education you have received and provided in Geropsychology during the preceding five years, including online courses, workshops, and independent readings.

**E. Scientific Base:**

Please provide evidence of the ways in which you utilize or contribute to the current science base by addressing one of the two following points: (a) the evidence base that informs your practice, including how you determine if your activities as a Professional Geropsychologist are effective; or (b) describe your own current clinical research activities and how these inform your practice. Your discussion should include enumeration of the key scientific issues, key research findings and areas of controversy, design considerations, decision-making models, limitations of current empirical findings, outcome research you rely upon or conduct, and other scientific considerations. If your practice includes use of instruments, please describe the key issues you consider in selecting these instruments, how you evaluate results, and how you make use of your evaluative findings.

**F. Ethical Base:**

Please describe two or three meaningful and challenging ethical dilemmas that you have personally encountered in your practice of Geropsychology. Your description should include the manner in which these issues relate to specific aspects of the APA *Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct*. Also, please indicate how you chose to resolve and manage the outcome of these dilemmas.

In conjunction with the submission of the PSS, the applicant must submit a statement declaring that there are no ethical complaints or judgments against them to facilitate the Board's review of the applicant's ethical standing. *It is the applicant's responsibility to notify the Board of any prior adverse ethical or licensure determinations and any pending allegations and their resolution.*

*Note: The Board may suspend action on any Applicant or Candidate who is being investigated by the Ethics Committee of the American Psychological Association, the American Psychological Society, a state board of psychologist examiners, or the ABPP Ethics Committee. It is the Applicant's responsibility to notify the Board of any prior adverse ethical or licensure determinations and any pending allegations and their resolution. The Board may initiate procedures to revoke the certification of an individual if it obtains information indicating that the person may have committed misconduct subject to the Ethics Rules and Procedures of the ABPP. "Sanctions by a licensing jurisdiction and/or the APA may result in adverse action, sanction and/or revocation of the ABPP board certification."*

#### G. Complex Relationships:

Please provide two or three examples of how you have handled complex interpersonal interactions (e.g., challenging relationships with older clients/patients; as a consultant, how do you determine who is your client – is it the establishment that employs you, the family member who pays for treatment, or the older client you are asked to help?) in one or more of the domains of Assessment, Intervention, Consultation, supervision, research inquiry, and professional development.

#### H. Individual & Cultural Diversity:

Please discuss how your work in Geropsychology is informed by an awareness of, and sensitivity to, diversity (i.e., individuals, groups and communities who represent various cultural and personal backgrounds and characteristics in older adults).

#### I. Self-Assessment:

Discuss how you have evolved, grown and improved as a psychologist in the specialty of Geropsychology, and what improvements you seek to make in your professional functioning.

### **WORK EXAMPLES**

All Applicants are required to submit two Work Examples, with each one representing a primary area of the Applicant's practice. The Applicant's choice of Work Examples (or other documentation provided by the Senior Psychologist, as discussed below) will help to define those areas covered by the Oral Examination.

Work Examples presented under the Traditional Option must have been collected within two years prior to advancement to candidacy and submitted within one year after advancement to candidacy. There is no time limit for when the work examples were produced under the senior option.

Work Examples submitted under the Traditional Option must be based on actual samples or work products of geropsychology practice carried out by the Candidate. The Work Examples must represent an activity that was neither supervised by nor conducted jointly with other professionals. If the work is a modification or enhancement of work previously developed by others, original information, concepts and ideas must be clearly differentiated from previous content. *Traditional*

*Option candidates who do not provide Work Example material sufficient to enable the Practice Sample Review Panel to evaluate their functional competency in their primary domain(s) of practice may be required to revise their Work Examples by submitting supplemental case materials.*

The two Work Examples under the Traditional Option are to be chosen from two separate functional competencies of specialty practice (i.e., Assessment, Intervention, Consultation). For example, a candidate who is a geropsychologist in private practice might submit a video of a first session with an older adult that includes a clinical assessment leading to a DSM diagnosis (Assessment functional competency) and a life review intervention (Intervention functional competency). Alternately, a geropsychologist choosing both Assessment and Intervention competencies might submit a personality assessment (Assessment functional competency) for one patient and detailed case notes of psychotherapy informed by the personality assessment (Intervention functional competency) form another. Alternately, a geropsychologist in private practice who chooses both Assessment and Consultation competencies might submit a summary of an initial cognitive evaluation to inform treatment planning (Assessment functional competency) and an audio tape of a consultation with the family of an older adult (Consultation functional competency).

For all Work Examples, a contextual statement should be included that contains a formulation of the candidate's understanding and approach to the case, a rationale for the service activities, and a summary of the findings/outcomes. The National Chair of Examinations (Victor Molinari [vmolinari@usf.edu](mailto:vmolinari@usf.edu)) is available for consultation to help the Applicant clarify selection of Work Examples and to ensure that the samples represent activities sufficiently distinct from one another. Applicants are strongly advised to take advantage of this consultation.

#### Details of Work Examples

In the case of assessments, all personal identifying information **must** be redacted.

Submitted material must include, in addition to the written assessment report:

- a. Psychological test data;
- b. Relevant background and/or life history information gathered personally by the Candidate;
- c. Consent and/or disclosure forms;
- d. The report provided to the referring agency.

In the case of intervention-based Work Examples submitted under the Traditional Option, the Candidate is required to include the following:

- a. Detailed contextual/historical information including a statement with dates of client/patient contacts (and/or critical incident if applicable), current session number in total sequence, non-identifying descriptive information and history, problem, course of treatment, DSM diagnosis (not applicable to critical incident initial interventions)
- b. Theoretical and empirical rationale for interventions used and goals for present intervention
- c. Formulation and discussion of the intervention in terms of identified theory of practice and relevant research
- d. Discussion of the individual and cultural diversity and ethical/legal considerations involved
- e. Reflective comment on the Candidate's own behavior and the interpersonal interactions in the sample
- f. Attestation that written informed consent was obtained

In the case of consultation-based Work Examples, the Candidate must submit a full description of this activity with all personal information redacted, as well as the following:

- a. Detailed contextual statement with dates of consultation contacts, non-identifying descriptive information of the consultation context, purpose and goals of consultation, brief history of consultation.
- b. Theoretical and empirical rationale for consultation activities used, goals for present consultation, and recommendations.
- c. Formulation and discussion of the consultation in terms of identified theory of practice and relevant research.
- d. Discussion of the individual and cultural diversity and ethical/legal considerations involved.
- e. Copy of the full written report (if applicable) with any confidential identifying information redacted.

*Work Examples by Senior Psychologists:*

As aforementioned, applicants applying under the Senior Psychologist Option are permitted to waive the requirement to submit specific Work Examples of geropsychology practice per se, and their Work Examples may provide documentation of practice competence in other ways. These include, but are not limited to, high impact books, book chapters, articles, presentations, or other treatises authored by the Applicant that articulate or describe the Applicant's approach to important aspects of his or her practice with older adults; responses to Requests For Proposal (RFPs) that detail the Applicant's approach to the provision of psychological services within Geropsychology; materials used by the applicant in connection with the teaching and training of Geropsychology (e.g., course syllabi), advocacy activities, and program development, or other evidence of substantial and competent practice within Geropsychology. Work Examples provided under the Senior Psychologist Option should not exceed 100 pages.