



NATIONAL
ASSOCIATION OF
SCHOOL
PSYCHOLOGISTS

Applying for the NCSP: Tips for Graduate Students

Congratulations on your interest in applying to become a Nationally Certified School Psychologist (NCSP)! NASP created the National School Psychology Certification System (NSPCS) for the purpose of credentialing school psychologists who meet a nationally recognized standard. Earning the NCSP is a great accomplishment and represents a valuable credential as a school psychologist. By pursuing and maintaining this certification, you demonstrate your commitment to the highest level of professionalism, ethics, and practice in school psychology. This document provides information for graduates from both NASP-approved and non-NASP approved programs that can be helpful in successfully navigating the application process and obtaining the NCSP credential.

NCSP: A Goal for All School Psychologists

Graduating from a NASP-approved training program streamlines the application process since coursework already meets NASP training standards. However, many graduates of non NASP-approved school psychology training programs are able to meet the requirements of the NCSP and apply successfully for certification. Documenting coursework and shaping fieldwork *early* in training will eliminate potential hassles when eventually applying for certification.

Requirements for All NCSP Applicants

It is very helpful to become familiar with [NASP's Standards for Training and Field Placement in School Psychology and Standards for Credentialing School Psychologists](#) at the onset of your graduate education. These training standards are critical to effective practice in today's schools and represent best practices in school psychology.

The [complete application](#) with accompanying materials is available online. Review this document early in your education to ensure that your coursework and fieldwork meet the National School Psychology Certification Board requirements.

All applicants must:

- Complete 60 graduate semester hours, or 90 quarter hours, of study through an organized program of study that is officially titled "School Psychology." At least 54 graduate semester hours, or 81 graduate quarter hours, must have been exclusive of credit received for the supervised internship experience.

- Complete a 1,200-hour *supervised* internship in school psychology, of which at least 600 hours must be in a school setting (supervised by a credentialed school psychologist). This internship must be recognized through institutional documentation (i.e., it must appear on your transcript). Your internship must be a culminating activity for your program of studies (i.e., practicum or fieldwork hours cannot be used toward internship hours). For information on NCSP internship requirements see the NASP fact sheet [Selecting a School Psychology Internship: Tips for Graduate Students](#).
- Register for and pass the National School Psychology Examination administered by the Educational Testing Service (ETS/PRAXIS II #10401). Applications for the ETS exam are due one month before the test date. NASP requires a passing score of 165 for NCSP certification. **Be sure to list NASP as a score recipient by entering the code “R1549” at the time of registration.** This will save you time and money when you apply for the NCSP.
- Review the following:
 - [ETS registration and test dates](#).
 - A [summary of topics](#) covered on the exam as well as practice questions.
 - [Recommendations, References and Study Tips for the Praxis II in School Psychology](#).

Application Process for Graduates of NASP-Approved Programs

- The application process is streamlined for graduates of NASP-approved training programs, since these programs are structured to meet coursework and training standards required by the certification board.
- Confirm that NASP has received your Praxis scores by calling the NASP Certification Department and providing them with the date you took the exam (mo/date/year) and name under which the test was taken.
- Print out and complete the application pages that are listed as necessary for all applicants.
- Obtain signatures from intern supervisors and faculty supervisors immediately upon completion of internship. These can be very difficult to collect later on and can be collected even if an applicant is not ready to send in a completed application.
- After graduation, obtain an official sealed copy of your graduate transcript; making sure it includes your internship and graduation date. Sealed transcripts also may be sent directly to the NASP office from your university.
- Send the complete application package, including transcript and application fee, to the NASP office. The address is listed in the application.

Application Process for Graduates of Non-NASP Approved Programs

While the application process is more involved, graduates of Non-NASP-approved training programs regularly meet the requirements for national certification. Keep the requirements for NCSP in mind when planning your course of study.

Make sure that the courses you take meet the various subject area requirements. As you complete your coursework, **save syllabi** for the courses that you believe meet the NCSP requirements. Be sure the syllabi include the course titles and numbers. You will need to provide copies of these as documentation of completed coursework. You need to demonstrate evidence of knowledge and professional competency in each of the *eleven domains*. Your portfolio

includes documentation of formal preparation and work products that demonstrate professional competency in school psychology.

The eleven domains of school psychology include:

1. Data-Based Decision Making and Accountability
2. Consultation and Collaboration
3. Effective Instruction & Development of Cognitive/Academic Skills
4. Socialization and Development of Life Skills
5. Student Diversity in Development and Learning
6. School and Systems Organization, Policy and Development and Climate
7. Prevention, Crisis Intervention and Mental Health
8. Home/School/Community Collaboration
9. Research and Program Evaluation
10. School Psychology Practice and Development
11. Information Technology

Prepare and submit a Case Study in Interventions/Problem Solving that demonstrates the ability to integrate knowledge and skills to deliver a comprehensive range of services that result in measurable positive changes related to the education and mental health needs of children. A [case study rubric and directions](#) are detailed in the certification application booklet and should be followed carefully. A case study is **not needed** from students who graduate from NASP-approved programs, as the training programs themselves require a comparable project. In writing the case study you should address:

- Background and context of the problem
- Description and analysis of the problem
- Link(s) between problem analysis data and goals for intervention
- Specific description of the intervention and steps for implementation
- Collaboration efforts with family, school, and/or community-based individuals
- Outcome data and discussion of results of the intervention
- If your program lacks other requirements for certification—such as a supervised, 1,200-hour internship— contact the NASP Certification office to determine if there is an alternative means through which to meet the NCSP requirements.
- Compile an original and four copies and all documentation necessary for the NCSP application, including: application forms, course syllabi, and completed case study. Keep one copy for yourself and send the original and three copies to NASP. Your case study must not exceed ten pages.

Steps to apply:

- Print out the application from the NASP website. Complete all pages of the application, including the pages listed for all applicants and those listed for graduates of non-NASP approved programs.
- Complete a content area verification form for any course in which the title of the course does not clearly reflect content that addresses all aspects of the NASP requirement. Obtain the appropriate signature(s). Include course descriptions and/or syllabi, which will help the Board to evaluate the appropriateness of your preparation in specific areas.

- After you graduate, obtain an official sealed copy of your graduate transcript; making sure it includes your internship and graduation date.
- Send the complete application package including transcript and application fee, to the NASP office. The address is listed in the application.

Other Application Information

- The certification board evaluates each individual application from graduates of non-NASP approved programs to ensure that all requirements are met. The professional standards staff at NASP generally evaluates applications from graduates of NASP-approved programs.
- Once you submit your application, the review process generally takes 6-8 weeks for graduates of NASP-approved programs and approximately three to four months for graduates of non-NASP-approved programs. Applications from non-NASP-approved programs are reviewed twice per year.
- Portfolios must be received by the due date (June 1 or December 1). Even if portfolios are submitted earlier than the due date, they will be held until the due date and then reviewed.
- If your application is found to be deficient, the certification department will notify you by mail. Common reasons why an application would be determined deficient include:
 - Failure to include syllabi for any courses that are not clearly defined by the transcript.
 - Submitting syllabi that do not list the course title or number.
 - Failure to provide work products that document professional competency in one or more of the domains.
 - Submitting a case study that does not follow the problem-solving model
 - Lack of internship documentation on graduate transcript.
 - Incomplete case study or application forms.
 - Missing signatures from professors or advisers.
 - ETS Praxis scores not sent to NASP directly from ETS.
- Individuals whose applications are approved will receive their certification materials by mail.

Information for School Psychologists without Appropriate Internship Experience

If you graduated from a program prior to 12/31/94 that did not offer a 1,200-hour internship, (or you have not completed an appropriate internship experience) you may be able to complete a field-based internship. Contact the NASP office for more information.

If you still have questions about the application process, review the [NCSP Frequently Asked Questions](#) and then, if needed, call the professional standards staff at (866) 331-NASP or (301) 657-0270, or e-mail cert@naspweb.org.

This fact sheet was developed by former NASP graduate assistant Andrea Cohn, NCSP, in collaboration with the National School Psychology Certification Board and members of the NCSP Taskforce.