Q&A Panel on Certification and Licensure in School Psychology

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Credential, Licensure, & Certification

- What is a credential and how does it differ from licensure and certification?
- Is there a difference between licensure and certification?
- Are there differences between Certification and Licensure when it comes to practice? Does this impact your ability to work in private practice and does this vary by state?
Your **credential** is the official recognition of **professional status**

- Evidence of your qualification to provide a variety of services (scope of practice)
- Authorizes you to use an official title
- Authorizes you to provide services in specified settings or conditions

**Terms** you need to know

- **Certification**
  - Term most often used for credentialing by State Education Agencies (SEA) giving authority to practice

- **Licensure**
  - Term most often used by Boards of Psychology giving authority to practice
  - Also used by increasing numbers of SEAs

- **Credential**
  - Broad term – indicator of having met criteria related to grad prep, experience, knowledge, skill
Reciprocity and Portability

- What do school psychology graduate students need to look for in terms of licensure and certification if we plan on completing internship and/or working in a district that's not in the same state as our graduate program?
- Is it possible to transfer a credential from one state to another?
- How much do licensure requirements vary from state to state?
- What recommendations do you have for navigating licensure if you plan to move from state to state (i.e., living and working in three different states over the course of 10 years)?

https://www.nasponline.org/standards-and-certification/state-school-psychology-credentialing-requirements
Licensing for Independent/Private Practice

- I am a PhD student at a school that is NASP accredited but not an APPIC school. What things do I need to make sure are in place for internship so that I can successfully apply for APA licensure?

- I am wondering about the eligibility and requirements for Private Practice work and the extent/limitations of the services we can offer at an M.A./Ed.S. level?
### Different entities issue credentials extending different privileges

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School-based Practice</th>
<th>Private/Independent Practice</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>SEA =</strong> State Education Agency (e.g., Dept. of Ed.)</td>
<td><em>Usually credentialed by state boards of psychology</em></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>SEAs</strong> credential, title and regulate school-based practice of school psychology in nearly all states.</td>
<td><strong>Other organizations may offer credentials in related disciplines, but usually not as a “psychologist”</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Exceptions exist (e.g., Texas, Hawaii)</td>
<td>• (e.g., Board of Professional Counselors; Boards of Allied Mental Health (MA); Board of Behavioral Sciences (CA))</td>
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<td>• Majority of states use NASP standards to set credentialing guidelines</td>
<td>• Many state boards use guidelines set by The Association of State and Provincial Psychology Boards (ASPPB) and APA</td>
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### Becoming Credentialed for Independent Practice as a Psychologist

Typically requires....
- Doctoral degree in either school, clinical, or counseling psych
  - Don’t always need APA-accredited program
- Completion of post doctoral supervised experience (required in some jurisdictions)
- Pass all required examinations
Practice **Outside Schools for Non-doctoral School Psychologists**

• Some states allow for unsupervised practice outside of schools

  – PA: allows school psychologists with the SEA credential to do private practice as long as they are employed by a school within the Commonwealth and in good standing
    • Option ends for those entering field after June, 2018

  – IN: Indiana offers those holding an SEA credential an “Independent Practice Endorsement” by meeting a set of criteria including supervised experience, current employment, and passing certain exams

Practice **Outside Schools** for School Psychologists: **Board regulated – Unsupervised [Examples]**

• FL: Florida offers a license for school psychologists through the Florida Office of School Psychology that allows for practice in the private sector with certain conditions met (Pass Praxis exam, supervision, 3 years experience).

• MA: The Board of Registration of Allied Mental Health and Human Service Professionals grants licensure as an “Educational Psychologist” with 2 years of supervised experience as a school psychologist

• SC: An individual holding the SEA credential may apply as a Licensed Psycho-Educational Specialist in order to practice in the private sector

• WV: The WV Board of Examiners has a two-level license. Level II allows for private practice of school psychology services as defined in the state statute.
Practice **Outside Schools for Non-doctoral** School Psychologists

- Many states offer a non-doctoral credential through the psychology board allowing for private practice **usually under supervision**. Some examples include:
  - AL: Psychological Technician
  - AK: Licensed Psychological Associate
  - AR: Psychological Examiner
  - CA: Licensed Educational Psychologist
  - IL: School Psychologist
  - KY: Licensed Psychological Practitioner or Associate
  - ME: Psychological Examiner
  - MD: Psychology Associate
  - OH: School Psychologist Licensure
  - WY: Specialist in School Psychology (NCSP)

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### NCSP

- I'd like to learn more about the process for getting the NCSP and what is required for maintaining the credential.
- What are the benefits of having an NCSP versus a state-specific licensure?
- What states (specifically) require NCSP and are there any states that waive their state licensure requirement if a school psychologist holds an NCSP?
- How much does it cost? Are more and more states accepting the NCSP credential?
- Is there a database where I can search the names/contact information of practitioners with the NCSP?
NCSP

- If we are attending a NASP approved program, do we need to obtain our state licensure prior to applying for the NCSP?
- How do intern graduate students prepare to apply for their NCSP?
- As someone who completed internship hours in a school-based setting under the supervision of a licensed clinical psychologist (but not a credentialed school psychologist), how does this affect my eligibility for the NCSP?
- Am I able to obtain the NCSP if my graduate program was not NASP approved and I have been working for several years?
- Am I impacted in any way in terms of NCSP if my previous University program (previously accredited) has ended or lost accreditation? I have already been through 1 renewal process.

NCSP

- Two pathways
  - Approved/accredited program
  - Non-approved or non-accredited program

Maintaining/Renewing

• NCSP requires 75 hours every 3 years (or average of 25 per year)
  – At least 3 – ethics or legal regulation
  – At least 10 NASP- or APA-approved CPD

More on the NCSP

• Recognized by 33 states as part of credentialing regulations
• Recognized by 9 states to satisfy renewal requirements
• Over 16,000 active NCSPs
• Professional identity and credibility
• Employment benefits
More on the NCSP

• Don’t wait to apply!
  – If completing a NASP-approved/accredited program, must apply within 10 years of graduation

• Don’t let it lapse
  – Get it, and keep it!
  – Availability of Inactive and Retired status to support those not in active employment

• NCSP credentialing Requirements > most state credentialing requirement
**NCSP Renewal**

- “For initial renewal of the NCSP credential, there should be evidence of having successfully completed a minimum of 1 academic year of professional support from a mentor or supervisor." 

- NASP’s Find-A-Mentor program

**Exams**

- When is the best time to take the licensure exam? Prior to the internship, during the internship, or after the internship is complete?

- When should graduate students take the praxis?

- What changes are there in the new version of the EPPP?
Independent Practice - Psychologist

- Examinations
  - EPPP: Examination for Professional Practice of Psychology (required in all U.S. states, 3 U.S. territories and 9 Canadian provinces)
    - EPPP (Part 2 – Skills): Early adopters started in 2020
    - Local jurisprudence/ethics exam
  - Possible oral exam, competency exam, or interview

SEA Credentialing inconsistencies across states: Professional Exams

- Praxis #5402 – minimum score of 147 for NCSP
  - Some states set lower score (some have not yet updated it for years)
- State specific exams (examples)
  - Georgia – GACE
  - Mississippi – Praxis I pre-professional skills
  - Illinois – Pearson exam (similar to but different than the Praxis)
- Other courses
  - ND requires 3 credit course in Native-American and multicultural studies
  - Nevada requires knowledge of US and Nevada constitutions
Internship and Post-doc

- Is it possible to obtain school-based hours for licensure/NCSP certification during a post-doc year after completing an APPIC internship outside of a school setting?

- What are the limitations to licensure/certification after a doctoral level school psych degree if a school-based non-APPIC internship is completed?

- Can I use internship hours and hours for licensure?

Field Experiences

- Practicum
  - Very few states require practicum for credential

- Internship
  - Variability in hours required, types of supervision, and types of experiences
  - 1200 hour (600 in schools) required for NCSP
Independent Practice - Psychologist

• Internship – To APPIC or not to APPIC?
  • Association of Psychology Postdoctoral and Internship Centers (APPIC) member internship programs
    • Not the same as APA accreditation
  • Many states do not require APPIC or APA internships
    • Instead have some general requirements for supervision
      • Supervisor credentials
      • Hours of work and supervision
      • Length of internship

Contract Services

➢ What is contract work and under what circumstances does one acquire such work? Is this in addition to maintaining a full-time school psych position?

➢ Working as contractor VS. Working as a district or Co-op employee

➢ I am wondering about contract/consult work: (what does it entail? In what circumstances would one look for this? How do we advertise these services?)
Contract Services

- Service provider is hired by the school district to carry out a specific assignment (i.e. psychoeducational assessment or counseling)
- This is typically permitted under SEA credentials, but should be verified with the state credentialing agency
- May contract directly with the district or be hired by a third-party agency

See “Considerations for Contract Services in School Psychology” on NASP website

Contract Services

- Direct contract with school district
  - Gives high level of flexibility
    **BUT**
  - Provide your own test materials
  - Fund your own healthcare, retirement, professional development, liability insurance
- Third party agency
  - Agency may handle administrative tasks (negotiating contract with district) and pay for some benefits
    **BUT**
  - May require non-compete that prevents you from obtaining employment from local districts after leaving the agency
Contract Services-Ethics

- Contracted service providers may offer a limited scope of services (e.g., prevention, early intervention, advocacy, family engagement, and crisis planning and response often are not included).
- Students and families not identified for specific services provided under contract may have reduced access to a broader range of services.
- School psychologists may lack integration within the school setting as temporary or itinerant employees.
- There is a lack of clarity regarding liability and responsibility for services, including potential conflicts in applicable laws based on the primary employer.

General & State Specific Questions about Credentialing

- Where should you begin to get licensed?
- How do we better support graduate students who are attending programs that do not lead to licensure? How can we prevent or do a better job notifying graduate students that these programs will not lead towards licensure?
- If a school is hiring for school counselor, are we eligible to apply with our SP licensure and fulfill that role?
- For bilingual school psychologists, is there an additional credential and/or certification available that we can apply for recognition?
Credentialing happens at the state level

Helpful Resources

• State School Psychology Credentialing
  • http://www.nasponline.org/standards-and-certification/state-school-psychology-credentialing-requirements

• ASPPB website
  • www.asppb.net

• NASP approved programs
  • https://www.nasponline.org/standards-and-certification/graduate-program-approval-and-accreditation/nasp-approved-programs

• APA accredited internship programs

• APPIC
  • www.appic.org

• National Register of Health Service Providers in Psychology
  • www.nationalregister.org/psychologists.html

• Best Practices in National Certification and Credentialing in School Psychology
  • Best Practices in School Psychology; Chapter 40; pp. 541-552