Standards for the Credentialing of School Psychologists

Credentialed is the process that authorizes the use of the title, “School Psychologist,” or related titles, by those professionals meeting accepted standards of training and experience who seek to provide school psychological services. The purpose of this document is to provide guidelines to state and national bodies for the establishment of, and procedural processes involved in, implementing credentialing standards. These guidelines were developed and approved by the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) pursuant to its mission to promote educationally and psychologically healthy environments for all children and youth and to advance the standards of the profession of school psychology.

The National School Psychology Certification System (NSPCS) was created by NASP to establish a nationally recognized standard for credentialing school psychologists. The title to be used by persons accepted into the NSPCS is “Nationally Certified School Psychologist,” or NCSP. Among the purposes of this national credentialing system are to promote uniform credentialing standards across states, agencies, and training institutions and to facilitate credentialing of school psychologists across states through the use of equivalency. The NASP Standards for the Credentialing of School Psychologists are used by the NSPCS and are considered appropriate for states to use in executing their authority in credentialing school psychologists.

**Credentialing Structure**

1. **Legal Basis for Credentialing**

1.1 Credentialed is the process whereby a state authorizes the provision of school psychological services and the use of the title, “School Psychologist,” (or related titles, such as “School Psychology Specialist”) by professionals who meet accepted standards of training and experience. The basis of a state's
credentialing authority is found in its statutory laws. Under these laws, all providers of school psychological services and all users of the title “School Psychologist” must hold a current credential, and legal sanctions and sanctioning procedures are provided for violators.

2. **Credentialing Body**

2.1 The state legislature empowers one or more bodies to administer the credentialing (certification and/or licensure) process. Administrative codes and regulations adopted by such bodies will comply with these Standards for the Credentialing of School Psychologists (or their equivalent) and carry the weight of law.

3. **Nature of the Credential**

3.1 The credential is issued in writing and expressly authorizes both the practice of school psychology as defined by NASP’s Guidelines for the Provision of School Psychological Services and the exclusive use of the title “School Psychologist” in all settings.

3.2 The credential is issued for a minimum period of three years.

3.3 Where a state empowers more than one body to issue more than one type of credential, such as for the separate regulation of school psychological services in the public schools and in independent practice, the lowest entry levels of all such credentials conform to these standards.

3.4 Upon completion of one academic year of post-degree supervision, the credential will allow school psychologists to have professional autonomy in determining the nature, scope, and extent of their specific services in all settings. These services will be consistent with NASP definitions of school psychological services and will be delivered within the bounds of the school psychologist’s training, supervised experience, and demonstrated expertise as specified in
CREDENTIALING REQUIREMENTS

4. Criteria for Credentialing

4.1 The minimum requirement for credentialing will be a sixth year/specialist program, with a 60 graduate semester hour minimum, consisting of coursework, practica, internship, and an appropriate graduate degree from an organized program of study that is officially titled “School Psychology.” Criteria for each area will be consistent with NASP’s Standards for Training and Field Placement Programs in School Psychology.

4.2 Domains of Professional Practice

The applicant will complete an integrated and sequential program of study that is explicitly designed to develop knowledge and practice competencies in each of the Domains of Professional Practice. Competency requires both knowledge and skills. School psychology programs ensure that candidates have a foundation in the knowledge base for psychology and education, including theories, models, empirical findings, and techniques in each domain. School psychology programs also ensure that candidates demonstrate the professional skills necessary to deliver effective services that result in positive outcomes in each domain.

The domains on the following page are not mutually exclusive and should be fully integrated into graduate level curricula, practica, and internship. Domains of Professional Practice are more fully illustrated on page 22 of NASP’s Standards for Training and Field Placement Programs in School Psychology.

1. Data-Based Decision-Making and Accountability:
   School psychologists have knowledge of varied models
and methods of assessment that yield information useful in identifying strengths and needs, in understanding problems, and in measuring progress and accomplishments. School psychologists use such models and methods as part of a systematic process to collect data and other information, translate assessment results into empirically-based decisions about service delivery, and evaluate the outcomes of services. Data-based decision-making permeates every aspect of professional practice.

2. **Consultation and Collaboration:** School psychologists have knowledge of behavioral, mental health, collaborative, and/or other consultation models and methods and of their application to particular situations. School psychologists collaborate effectively with others in planning and decision-making processes at the individual, group, and system levels.

3. **Effective Instruction and Development of Cognitive/Academic Skills:** School psychologists have knowledge of human learning processes, techniques to assess these processes, and direct and indirect services applicable to the development of cognitive and academic skills. School psychologists, in collaboration with others, develop appropriate cognitive and academic goals for students with different abilities, disabilities, strengths, and needs; implement interventions to achieve those goals; and evaluate the effectiveness of interventions. Such interventions include, but are not limited to, instructional interventions and consultation.

4. **Socialization and Development of Life Skills:** School psychologists have knowledge of human developmental processes, techniques to assess these processes, and direct and indirect services applicable to the development of behavioral, affective, adaptive, and social skills. School psychologists, in collaboration with others, develop appropriate behavioral, affective, adaptive, and social
goals for students of varying abilities, disabilities, strengths, and needs; implement interventions to achieve those goals; and evaluate the effectiveness of interventions. Such interventions include, but are not limited to, consultation, behavioral assessment/intervention, and counseling.

5. **Student Diversity in Development and Learning:** School psychologists have knowledge of individual differences, abilities, and disabilities and of the potential influence of biological, social, cultural, ethnic, experiential, socioeconomic, gender-related, and linguistic factors in development and learning. School psychologists demonstrate the sensitivity and skills needed to work with individuals of diverse characteristics and to implement strategies selected and/or adapted based on individual characteristics, strengths, and needs.

6. **School and Systems Organization, Policy Development, and Climate:** School psychologists have knowledge of general education, special education, and other educational and related services. They understand schools and other settings as systems. School psychologists work with individuals and groups to facilitate policies and practices that create and maintain safe, supportive, and effective learning environments for children and others.

7. **Prevention, Crisis Intervention, and Mental Health:** School psychologists have knowledge of human development and psychopathology and of associated biological, cultural, and social influences on human behavior. School psychologists provide or contribute to prevention and intervention programs that promote the mental health and physical well-being of students.

8. **Home/School/Community Collaboration:** School psychologists have knowledge of family systems, including family strengths and influences on student development,
learning, and behavior, and of methods to involve families in education and service delivery. School psychologists work effectively with families, educators, and others in the community to promote and provide comprehensive services to children and families.

9. **Research and Program Evaluation:** School psychologists have knowledge of research, statistics, and evaluation methods. School psychologists evaluate research, translate research into practice, and understand research design and statistics in sufficient depth to plan and conduct investigations and program evaluations for improvement of services.

10. **School Psychology Practice and Development:** School psychologists have knowledge of the history and foundations of their profession; of various service models and methods; of public policy development applicable to services to children and families; and of ethical, professional, and legal standards. School psychologists practice in ways that are consistent with applicable standards, are involved in their profession, and have the knowledge and skills needed to acquire career-long professional development.

11. **Information Technology:** School psychologists have knowledge of information sources and technology relevant to their work. School psychologists access, evaluate, and utilize information sources and technology in ways that safeguard or enhance the quality of services.

4.3 Practica will consist of a sequence of closely supervised on-campus or field-based activities designed to develop and evaluate a candidate's mastery of distinct professional skills consistent with program and/or course goals. Practica activities may be completed as part of separate courses focusing on distinct skills or as part of a more extensive experience that covers a range of skills.
4.4 The internship experience will consist of a full-time experience over one year, or half-time over two consecutive years, with a minimum of 1200 clock hours, of which at least 600 hours must be in a school setting. A comprehensive internship experience is required for candidates to demonstrate, under supervision, the ability to integrate knowledge and skills in the professional practice domains and to provide a broad range of outcome-based school psychological services. Internship experiences are provided at or near the end of the formal training period, are designed according to a written plan that provides a broad range of experiences, occur in a setting appropriate to the specific training objectives of the program, are provided appropriate recognition through the awarding of academic credit, occur under conditions of appropriate supervision, are systematically evaluated in a manner consistent with the specific training objectives of the program, and are conducted in accordance with current legal and ethical standards for the profession.

4.5 Professional Work Characteristics

The candidate's professional work characteristics will be evaluated and verified by the school psychology training program through information collected during courses, practica, internship, and other appropriate means. Professional work characteristics will include:

1. Respect for human diversity
2. Communication skills
3. Effective interpersonal relations
4. Ethical responsibility
5. Adaptability
6. Initiative and dependability
CREDENTIALING PROCEDURES

5. Implementation of Credentialing Criteria

5.1 Graduates of NASP approved programs, or programs consistent with NASP’s Standards for Training and Field Placement Programs in School Psychology, and graduates of school psychology programs that, at the time of the applicant’s graduation, were accredited by an agency approved by the U.S. Department of Education and met the internship requirement specified in Standard 4.4, are eligible for credentialing. (A complete listing of NASP approved programs, Approved Programs in School Psychology, is published annually.)

5.2 Each program that meets the criteria in Standard 5.1 is responsible for assessing a candidate’s professional work characteristics and competency in the domains of professional practice.

5.3 All assessment methods used by the credentialing body or training program rely on the most objective, quantifiable, and reliable procedures available. Performance-based assessment uses multiple methods of assessment including multiple data sources, environments, and domains.

5.4 The responsibility for the final determination of professional competencies in all areas rests with the credentialing body.

6. State Credential

6.1 The state credential is granted to individuals who meet the requirements described in Standard 4, including completion of an appropriate graduate degree, demonstration of professional work characteristics, completion of applied professional practice, and competency in the domains of professional practice.
6.2 Persons who hold the credential Nationally Certified School Psychologist (NCSP) meet the criteria for an initial state credential.

6.3 Upon initial granting of the state credential, the individual arranges supervision and mentoring to assure that entry-level qualifications are translated into ongoing competency in the provision of school psychological services. Supervision consists of a minimum of two hours per week, in a face-to-face format, for the initial academic year of full-time practice or the equivalent.

6.4 Supervision and mentoring will be provided by a credentialed school psychologist with a minimum of three years of experience. For any portion of the experience that is accumulated in a non-school setting, supervision and mentoring will be provided by a psychologist or school psychologist appropriately credentialed for practice in that setting.

6.5 Initial renewal of the state credential will be granted to applicants meeting the following criteria:

A. Evidence of public, private, or university-based practice for a minimum of one academic year of full-time equivalent (FTE) experience during the previous three years.

B. Evidence of continuing professional development for a minimum of 75 clock hours in the previous three year period during which the credential was in effect.

7. Nationally Certified School Psychologist

7.1 The credential, Nationally Certified School Psychologist (NCSP), is granted to persons who have successfully met national training standards by:

A. Achieving a passing score on the Educational Testing Service's (ETS) School Psychology Examination as
Standards for Training and Field Placement Programs in School Psychology

determined by the National School Psychology Certification Board, and

B. Graduation from a NASP approved program, or

C. Completion of a sixth-year/specialist level program or higher in school psychology, with a 60 graduate semester hour minimum or equivalent, consisting of course work, practica, internship, and an appropriate graduate degree from an organized program of study that is officially titled “School Psychology,” and

D. Successful completion of a 1,200 clock hour supervised internship in school psychology, at least 600 hours of which must be in a school setting, and

E. Demonstration of competency in the domains of professional practice as specified in Standard 4.2.

7.2 Renewal of the NCSP will be granted to applicants who complete at least 75 contact hours of continuing professional development activities within a three-year period.

8. Withdrawal/Termination of the Credential

8.1 The credentialing body has the right to cancel, revoke, suspend, or refuse to renew the credential of any school psychologist, or to reprimand any school psychologist, upon proof that the school psychologist has engaged in unprofessional conduct as defined by NASP’s Principles for Professional Ethics or Guidelines for the Provision of School Psychological Services. Such action must be based on a formal finding of guilt by the appropriate adjudicating body after following a documented procedure ensuring that the due process rights of all parties involved have been fully observed.
APPENDIX A
DEFINITION OF TERMS USED IN
STANDARDS FOR THE CREDENTIALING
OF SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGISTS

STANDARD 3.1:

**NASP Guidelines for the Provision of School Psychological Services:** The current standards document from the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) describing the delivery of appropriate and comprehensive school psychological services for administrative and employing agencies.

STANDARD 3.4:

**NASP Principles for Professional Ethics:** The current document of principles from the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) describing guidelines for ethical behavior including professional competency, professional relationships and responsibilities, and professional practices in public and private settings.

STANDARD 4.1:

**NASP Standards for Training and Field Placement Programs in School Psychology:** The current standards document from the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) describing procedural standards supporting the comprehensive training of school psychologists at the doctoral and sixth year/specialist levels.

STANDARD 4.4:

**School Setting (from Appendix A of NASP Standards for Training and Field Placement Programs in School Psychology):** A setting in which the primary goal is the education of P-12 students of diverse backgrounds, characteristics, abilities, disabilities, and needs. The school setting has available an internal or external pupil services unit that includes at least one credentialed school psychologist and provides a full range of student services.
STANDARD 5.1:

Approved Programs in School Psychology: The National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) publishes annually a list of training programs in school psychology that have been determined to meet NASP Standards for Training and Field Placement Programs in School Psychology. A copy of the Approved Program list can be obtained by contacting the National Association of School Psychologists at 4340 East West Highway, Suite 402, Bethesda, Maryland 20814, by e-mail at cert@naspweb.org, or can be found at the NASP website: www.naspweb.org