

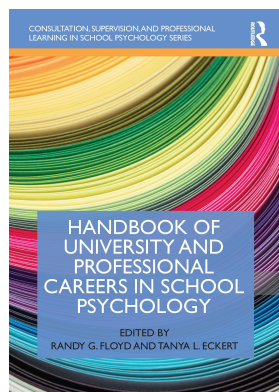
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Obtaining Post-Degree Supervision, Certification, and Licensure

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2 Obtaining Post-Degree Supervision, Certification, and Licensure

Janay B. Sander and Kisha M. Radliff

The decision to obtain licensure or seek certification is important for a variety of reasons, and there are long-term career implications regarding holding a license. The terms *credential*, *licensure*, and *certification* vary by jurisdiction. For clarity, in this chapter, we will use *school psychology credential* to reflect school-based practice, and *licensure* to reflect health service psychology, which is primarily doctoral-level practice. In general, there is high demand for psychologists and school psychologists who have skills to work in applied settings, and psychology is growing compared to other professions (Bureau of Labor Statistics, n.d.). It is typical in academic job postings in the field of school psychology to list eligibility for licensure as one of the preferred qualifications. This is not the same as the minimum qualifications, meaning it is feasible to obtain a job in academia without a license. At the same time, the long-term career roles of individual faculty members may be of lesser importance to universities trying to fill a vacancy for an urgent need in the immediate future. Historically, it was not important or desirable to hold a clinical practice credential of any kind as a faculty member in many university settings. This may no longer be the widely held expectation. Holding a license or school psychology credential for practice may be necessary, or at least helpful, for several faculty roles over the duration of a career. Obtaining doctoral-level licensure is challenging once professionals start a full-time faculty position, and there is a disconnect with the value and training priority of having licensed faculty contributing to doctoral training programs and the number of hurdles that most professionals encounter if they seek licensure after starting a faculty position post-degree (DiLillo, DeGue, Cohen, & Morgan, 2006). There are fewer barriers to obtaining a school psychology credential, but they exist as well. This chapter will provide an overview of the faculty roles where licensure may be helpful, including professional standards and resources regarding licensure, along with an array of personal and professional considerations for obtaining licensure, followed by resources to pursue steps to licensure. Considerations for faculty considering a school psychology credential will also be addressed.

Professional Roles and Licensure in Faculty Positions

There are several faculty roles where holding a license would be an asset. First, the professional organizations in school psychology clearly support licensure, even for full-time faculty. The National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) Standards for Graduate Education (2010, 2020, section 1.2, para. 2) states that each program should include “at least two school psychology program faculty members (including the program administrator) who hold doctoral degrees with specialization in school psychology and are actively engaged in school psychology (e.g., possess state or national credentials as school psychologists.” The routes to be engaged are somewhat flexible, but maintaining licensure or credentials as a school psychologist can be viewed as one way to demonstrate clear engagement in the profession.

The American Psychological Association's (APA) current Standards of Accreditation (SoA; APA, 2015b) reflects a similar emphasis. While it is not an explicit SoA requirement that the faculty members in leadership roles of a training program be licensed as psychologists at the level of independent practice, the APA Implementing Regulations (IR C.23-D, November, 2015) states programs must provide evidence that they have leaders who are "qualified" for their roles. The SoA (rev. June 2018; Section I.C.1.a) specifies that programs must provide evidence they have

a designated leader who is a doctoral-level psychologist and a member of the core faculty. The program leader's credentials and expertise must be in an area covered by HSP [health service psychology] accreditation and must be consistent with the program's aims.

Programs who have several faculty members who have licensure in a health service psychology area, including the program leadership, even if not explicitly prescribed as an SoA requirement, could likely provide this as evidence to fulfill this accreditation standard.

In addition to program leadership, another faculty role that may require a license or school psychology credential is providing training and supervision to students in settings other than a university classroom. This may occur as part of a course with an applied service requirement or a practicum. One model of supervision in graduate programs relies on faculty who are licensed psychologists or credentialed school psychologists providing supervision to students in their training experiences. With a shortage of field-based supervisors in school psychology, this may be more common for faculty in some rural or underserved regions and may become more typical in many areas over time if the shortages continue.

Knowing and understanding the scope of practice and the board of education or psychology board rules in any state or jurisdiction is highly relevant to faculty positions with respect to licensure and credentialing. Teaching in a university setting by itself, either in research or with mock clients or role plays, may be considered research or teaching in a faculty role and not require a license of any kind. Needing a license or credential to consult with schools or supervise students giving assessments to the public as part of a formal training experience might be an activity that requires a license or credential in some states. This may come as a surprise when moving to a new state or if the board rules change within that jurisdiction over time. Ultimately, holding and maintaining a license or credential would be a wise precaution and allow for more flexibility in faculty roles within an academic setting over time. A career could easily span up to four decades, and some roles would not have been expected when taking that first job as a new faculty member. Licensure could become relevant after several years in the position, such as after tenure, when other faculty resign or retire, or there is a gap in supervision (e.g., medical issue, family leave, field supervisor resignation, or death) for students in their training settings. Lastly, if academia ends up being a less than ideal career path, or the unexpected unfavorable tenure decision happens, having a license or credential allows enormous job security and career flexibility over time.

In a nutshell, there are several important questions to ask yourself and ask your available colleagues, peers, and mentors when deciding about seeking licensure or school psychology credentials. If your career path is in academia, are you ready to concede as a new doctoral graduate that you will never be needed or interested in serving as a training director in an APA-accredited doctoral school psychology program? Would you be confident that you would not be called upon to provide supervision for graduate students? How certain are you that you will remain in your current state or jurisdiction or that the board rules governing the professions of school psychology and health service psychology in your state will remain unchanged regarding supervision and faculty roles? These are important considerations that could matter 5–10 years

post-degree even if they are not currently a concern. Licensure or certification can also be important for career longevity and mobility, regardless of the initial post-degree employment setting. In other words, there are individual career and field-specific factors relevant to any decision to pursue licensure or certification, including post-degree supervision.

This question about licensure and credentialing relates not only to the individual faculty member, but to department chairs and university administrators responsible for ensuring compliance with various accreditation requirements. If the core faculty in a school psychology training program are unlicensed, this could potentially be cause for concern about faculty qualifications for accrediting body expectations in the areas of school psychology and health service psychology. Administrators may need to consider how to best support an accredited graduate training program focused on preparing license-eligible graduates by way of rewarding faculty for obtaining and maintaining the credentials the program is preparing its students to seek. Including mechanisms in the hiring and tenure and promotion process to help ensure some portion of program faculty are licensed could be critical in ensuring stable and qualified leadership within these programs.

We offer a decision table (see Table 2.1) to help faculty and potential faculty members make decisions about obtaining licensure. Due to the common expectation of faculty positions in school psychology that faculty would be graduates of APA-accredited doctoral programs, it is assumed that as part of their training the faculty member would have completed a doctoral-level internship that would be license-eligible at the level of health service psychologist in independent practice. If that is not the case, then eligibility to seek licensure or certification as a school psychologist would be the option. If the program did not provide license-eligible training for either route to a practicing license, then licensure or credentials would likely not be feasible. Areas of research, teaching, service and other career considerations are included in Table 2.1. Ideally, having the appropriate credential or license to be able to undertake each professional activity without needing supervision is preferred and allows more autonomy and flexibility for the faculty member over time.

As you can see, there are many considerations in the short-term and long-term regarding seeking licensure. Table 2.1 is not an exhaustive list, and there are continual shifts in professional expectations, university needs, accreditation standards, board of psychology rules, and personal circumstances over time. For some portion of individuals seeking faculty roles, holding a credential or license will not be necessary, and your career will be very satisfying without it. For others, it is not as clear-cut. For some, holding a credential or license would be essential for having the impact and tools you need to fulfill the roles consistent with your skills and interests. The remainder of this chapter focuses on offering information for those who might want a license or who are more sure they will be seeking a license at some point.

Professional Standards and Training Guidelines Regarding Licensure or Certification

In many states and jurisdictions full-time faculty are permitted to provide instruction in the broad field of health service psychology, where unlicensed practice of health service psychology or school psychology is prohibited, but faculty are exempt from that state rule. One example is in the Board of Psychology State Rules in Indiana (see IC 25–33–1–14):

- a This section does not apply to an individual who is: (1) a member of a teaching faculty, at a public or private postsecondary educational institution for the purpose of teaching, research, or the exchange or dissemination of information and ideas as an assigned duty of the institution; (2) a commissioned psychology officer in the regular United States armed

Table 2.1 Licensure Decision Considerations

<i>Area of Career Consideration: Should You Seek a License?</i>	<i>Yes, It Is Likely a Good Idea To Seek Licensure</i>	<i>No, It Is Likely That There Is No License Needed</i>
Research: What does your line of research include?	Your research involves assessment of mental health areas of functioning and interventions in schools, clinics, or other community settings. The services studied in research would typically be delivered or supervised by a licensed educational or mental health professional. Your research measures require specific credentials to purchase from the publisher.	Your research is not with human participants (i.e., statistical modeling). Your research primarily employs public datasets, archival data, or adult university human research participant pools for low-risk or other non-mental health intervention studies.
Teaching: Which courses are you likely to teach now and in the future?	It is likely you will teach and supervise practica and other courses involving services to the public.	It is likely you will teach classroom-based didactic courses only. You will probably require students to draw on only volunteers and employ mock clients. You will have no interaction with the public for educational or mental-health-related service, learning, or practicum experiences.
Service: Where do you envision providing service to your university, community, and profession?	You are interested in providing psychological consultation (broadly defined) in schools, community settings, or any non-university service role. You are willing to supervise student dissertations or thesis projects involving applied research in non-university populations. You are interested in program and professional leadership roles at some point (i.e., being program coordinator or practicum coordinator)	You are only interested in providing service in university roles typical of any faculty member, regardless of area of expertise (i.e., participating in department governance or university governance, or on the institutional review board). You are likely to provide statistical consultation or program evaluation consultation but not applied health service psychology or school psychology-specific forms of consultation to the public. You have no interest in serving in leadership roles in license-eligible accredited programs in school psychology.
Long-term career goals: What are your long-term goals, and what might you consider if any situation changes or your own needs and interests shift over time?	You are interested in providing health service psychology services or school-based professional practice. You are interested in, perhaps someday, engaging in private practice, but you have no specific timeline in mind. You are interested in having a back-up career option in the event you are unsatisfied in academia or have an unfavorable tenure decision. You wish to have more autonomy in your schedule, more clear boundaries around your personal time, and some financial flexibility to supplement your income if necessary. You are generally satisfied offering psychological services, and you may need to be flexible for mobility or a dual-career household situation.	Your career goals are solidly within academia, and you have no interest in leaving the academe. If academia did not work out well for you, you would not be interested in private practice or applied school psychology service or health service psychology as a career option.

services; (3) licensed by the department of education (established by IC 20-19-3-1) as a school psychologist and using the title “school psychologist” or “school psychometrist” as an employee of a school corporation.

Importantly, supervision of students who are providing psychological services in schools or as part of a formal training program may be viewed as serving the public, beyond teaching alone, and could pose a concern unless the faculty member holds the appropriate credential or license in that jurisdiction. To clarify again, as an example, the state board rules in Indiana specify in section IC 25–33-1–14 (c),

It is unlawful for any individual, regardless of title, to render, or offer to render, psychological services to individuals, organizations, or to the public, unless the individual holds a valid license issued under this article or a valid endorsement issued under Indiana IC 20–28-12 or is exempted under section 1.1 of this chapter.

In other words, supervision of services provided to the public (including to schools or any students other than those enrolled in the training program) may require holding a credential or license in that jurisdiction. There are several types of licenses and credentials that would be relevant to provision of services and potentially conducting applied research in academia. Several common areas of expertise and licensure options are offered in the sections that follow. A resource list with links to various national- and state-level training groups and credentialing agencies is provided in Table 2.2.

Licensed Psychologist at the Independent Practice Level

For those in academia, maintaining an active license as a health service psychologist can be an asset for seeking some types of funding for research, in leadership roles for APA-accredited programs, and as evidence that the program faculty is consistent with modeling professional practice as a health service psychologist. A license at the level of independent practice is typically granted at the doctoral level by application and approval from state boards of psychology in most states and jurisdictions in North America. Some states have a master’s-level option as well. In fact, at the time this chapter was in final editing stages, the APA Commission on Accreditation released a document for public comment about master’s-level accreditation, which would have broader implications for licensure at the master’s level moving forward. For the time-being, though, eligibility for doctoral-level licensure as a health service psychologist is usually based on being a graduate of an APA-accredited doctoral training program in the current SoA and Implementing Regulations, which are also recognized by the Canadian Psychological Association.

In academia, having a license as a psychologist at the level of independent practice within the field of psychology is not typical, but can be valuable to the individual and to the university program. Survey data reported by APA (2015a) about licensure indicated approximately 12% of licensed psychologists work as their main full-time job in a university setting. For psychologists employed in a second place of employment, 11% are also working in universities. Approximately 3% of all licensed psychologists claim a primary or secondary specialization in the area of school psychology and hold the relevant credentials. In some ways, this low percentage highlights the value of credentialed faculty, especially those in school psychology, who hold and maintain licenses to practice. There are several steps to being eligible for licensure, some of which matter during doctoral training. See Figure 2.1 for a snapshot of the steps and considerations during graduate training, internship, and post-degree.

Table 2.2 Resources to Support Post-Degree Supervision, Certification, and Licensure

Licensure Information and Resources

APA: State Licensure and Certification Information for Psychologists. It can be challenging to find information about licensure across states. The APA website has a page dedicated to information and relevant links about psychology and school psychology licensure across every state. Information about state licensure requirements (e.g., testing and supervised hours) and banked credentials accepted may also be included. Website: <https://www.apaservices.org/practice/ce/state/state-info>

ASPPB PSY|Book: Psychology Licensing Requirements. The ASPPB has developed a handbook that provides basic information for psychological licensure in the United States and Canada, though it might not have information for every state or province. Users can select a “map” or “list” view, then search for different types of licensure, including psychologist, school psychologist, behavior analyst, and psychological associate. Lastly, the jurisdiction (state, territory, or province) is selected. The list of requirements will highlight the elements applicable to the selected jurisdiction. Link: <https://www.asppb.net/page/psybook>

Credential Information and Resources

American Board of Professional Psychology (ABPP). This organization provides certification in 15 specialization areas, including Clinical Neuropsychology and School Psychology. A list of states who recognize the ABPP credential for licensure mobility is also available. Link: <https://www.abpp.org>

Behavior Analyst Certification Board. This credentialing organization serves consumers of behavior analysis services. There are varying types of certification for behavior analysts based on level of education and training. Link: <https://www.bacb.com/bcba/>

NASP: Nationally Certified School Psychologist credential. This is a nationally recognized credential to streamline the process of seeking state-level credentials applicable to practicing school psychologists. The website includes clear information about the experiences and training elements required for eligibility to seek the NCSP, including information at the level of each state or jurisdiction. Link: <https://www.nasponline.org/standards-and-certification/national-certification/why-become-an-ncsp>

NASP Bilingual School Psychology Certification. This website contains information about states where bilingual certification is offered, training programs with bilingual emphasis, and a discussion group dedicated to this topic. Link: <https://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/-resources-and-podcasts/diversity/cultural-competence/bilingual-school-psychology-certification>

Resources Related to Postdoctoral Fellowships

The APA’s Division 16 webpage. This page has a Job Posts tab that includes a section for postdoctoral fellowships. Website: <https://apadivision16.org/category/job-posts/postdoctoral/>

APA’s Early Career Listserv. This is a discussion list focused on resources, tips, and support for early career professionals. Link: <https://www.apa.org/careers/early-career/get-connected/>

APA Monitor. This is the APA’s monthly newsletter that can be accessed at the website. There is a section on job posts that includes information about postdoctoral fellowships. Link: <https://www.apa.org/monitor/>

APPIC’s Email Lists: Postdoc-Network. This discussion list is for postdoctoral candidates and postdoctoral applicants. You do not have to be a member of APPIC to use this email list; it is open to the public. Link: <https://www.appic.org/E-Mail-Lists/Summary-of-APPICs-E-Mail-Lists/PostdocNetwork>

Psychology Job Wiki. This site that provides information about academic job searches occurring during a given year across all areas of psychology. Postdoctoral positions may also be included here. Link: <http://psychjobsearch.wikidot.com/#toc17>

Additional reading. *To Postdoc Or Not To Postdoc? How To Weigh Whether Postdoctoral Training Will Boost Your Career Prospects.* (*gradPSYCH Magazine*, 2014): Link: <https://www.apa.org/gradpsych/2014/04/postdoc>

In order to be eligible for licensure as a doctoral-level health service psychologist, the doctoral internship is an important element. Obtaining an internship that will be license-eligible at the end is essential. In the field, there remains an imbalance of APA-accredited school psychology internships, and a critical shortage of school psychologists in public schools. In the 2019

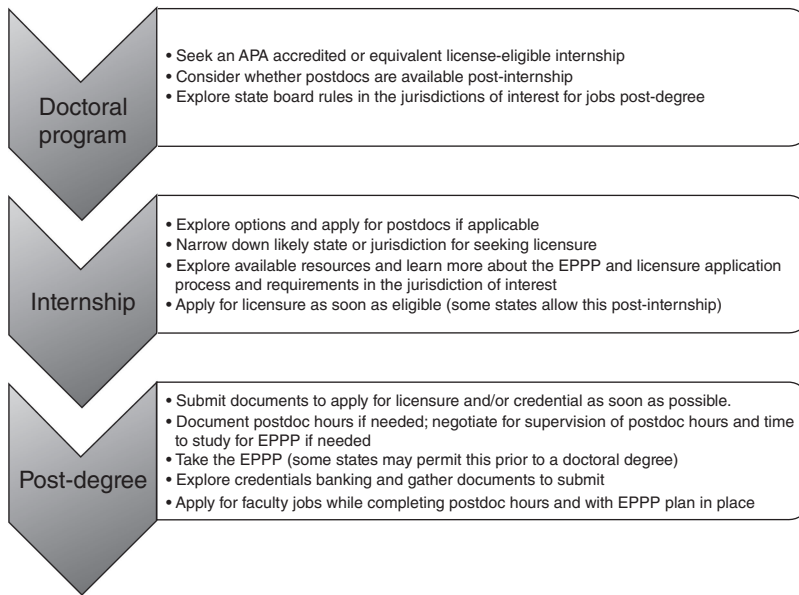


Figure 2.1 Licensure in health service psychology: Steps at each stage of training.

Association of Psychology Postdoctoral and Internship Centers (APPIC) directory, the paucity of training settings for school psychology is clear. Even though there are 785 APA-accredited doctoral internships, only 216 of these internships (28%) accept applicants from school psychology programs. Of the APPIC members, including non-APA-accredited sites, only 34 of them are in school districts. This may be part of the reason 6.5% of school psychology doctoral students did not match in 2019, which is double the rate of counseling and clinical doctoral students who did not match (APPIC, 2019). A partial solution to both these problems could rest on having more doctoral-level school psychologists who are also credentialed as school psychologists or licensed psychologists working and providing specialist or doctoral-level internship training in school settings. Faculty may be able to help facilitate and encourage students to explore various pathways to licensure after graduation from their training programs. In some ways, it is easier to encourage this when the faculty member holds a license themselves.

Licensure for independent practice in health service psychology is typically granted by a state-level agency or board. Those board rules often include additional requirements, such as work experience or additional post-degree supervision. For example, the Ohio State Board of Psychology's Laws and Rules Governing the Practice of Psychology (n.d.) states that an individual can become a "licensed school psychologist" if they have at least a master's degree in school psychology (or a degree considered equivalent with relevant practica) from an accredited institution and at least 4 years of school psychology experience, inclusive of internship (see § 4732; § 4732–9-02). The license stipulates that individuals can independently engage in school psychology practice. While individuals with terminal degrees at the master's level typically cannot currently work independently outside of the school setting in Ohio, they can work in non-school settings (e.g., private practice and hospitals) under the supervision of a licensed psychologist.

As another example of how widely board rules can vary, the Texas State Board of Psychology's Acts and Rules of the Board (2019) has provisions for master's-level practitioners offering "psychological associate" services after they meet the criteria for seeking licensure as independent practitioners from the board after earning the appropriate master's-level terminal degree

and obtaining 3,000 hours of supervised experiences (see § 501.259; § 463.8 (c) 2.A). Other states and jurisdictions may have similar provisions.

Postdoctoral Supervision

Postdoctoral supervision requirements vary by state and jurisdiction. It is necessary to become familiar with licensure eligibility and postdoctoral supervision requirements in each state where the individual may end up residing or working. The field in general is in agreement on some aspects of postdoctoral training, but not all elements. In May 2016, APPIC and APA held a summit on postdoctoral training in health service psychology to address issues in postdoctoral training and collaborate in ensuring that the greater good of the public and the field remained the emphasis of their work. A consensus emerged that the purpose of postdoctoral training was to obtain advanced competencies within a recognized specialty (e.g., School Psychology and Counseling Psychology), or advanced competencies within a specific area of emphasis (e.g., bipolar disorder). This is distinct from the broad training that is intended at earlier levels of training. Several perceived benefits of postdoctoral training were also discussed, including increased credibility with other health professionals, documentation of advanced competency, increased mobility, and greater marketability, among others.

Not all postdoctoral positions are equal. This was another point of discussion at the APPIC and APA summit. Historically, there was little standardization in postdoctoral training. There are postdoctoral training programs that are APA-accredited and others that meet APPIC membership criteria, though this does not guarantee that it meets licensure requirements across all jurisdictions. APA-accreditation and APPIC membership criteria both require evidence of a supervision plan for the postdoctoral trainee. It is important to do some research on postdoctoral positions you are considering. Postdoctoral positions found through an organization like APPIC have to meet certain requirements to ensure that the applicant receives appropriate training and supervision.

Postdoctoral positions that are less formalized may not focus on licensure requirements to ensure the applicant has a specific number of hours or the appropriate level of supervision. These would be important things to ask about if they are not written into the description of the position. Additionally, health service psychologists will sometimes enter into a job or part-time work that could count for postdoctoral hours, but do not have access to a licensed supervisor. In these situations, individuals might opt to find someone who would be willing to provide supervision at cost. If you are considering this route for obtaining supervision in your work towards licensure, it is critical that you review the licensure requirements in your jurisdiction. There are often specific requirements that the supervisor have some connection to the site where you are working. For example, if you are completing cases in a school, someone working part time in your school district may be more appropriate to supervise you than someone from independent practice. Ultimately, it is up to the individual to explore options, state board rules, and postdoctoral elements to decide what will be the best fit for their career. Fortunately, there are several resources to assist (see Table 2.2).

Credentials as a School Psychologist

The NASP's focus on credentialing of faculty conveys value of the applied skills the students in NASP-approved programs would be learning. Credentials to practice school psychology in school settings are granted at the state level, usually by a Board of Education. In some locations, the states would grant a "license" to school psychologists and in others it is a "credential," but ultimately, it indicates appropriate preparation for school psychology practice without additional supervision. In one or two states, the Board of Psychology may

govern the practice of school psychology in school settings, but this is atypical. The school psychologist license or credential is typically limited to practice in school settings, but there are some exceptions. The application to the state agency to obtain a license to practice as a school psychologist in school settings would often include verification of terminal degree and training in school psychology, along with supervisor verification of supervised practicum or school psychology internship experiences. There are usually requirements for passing exams, such as the PRAXIS II, offered by Educational Testing Services. We offer resources to explore options, requirements, and routes to state-level credentialing as a school psychologist in the sections that follow. In addition to a school psychology credential, holding additional certifications or credentials in a related, specialized area of professional practice may offer advantages. The certification does not typically permit a professional to engage in that practice per se, but it does convey assurance to the state-level licensing agency, as well as to the public and potential clients served, about any specialized training and expertise the professional has obtained.

Credential as a Nationally Certified School Psychologist

Having the professional endorsement at the national level based on NASP's National Certification in School Psychology (NCSP) is frequently used as evidence of the quality of training, but it is not a state board license or state-level credential on its own. The NCSP credential allows for more portability between states and demonstrates a national level of equivalent training in the field of school psychology. As of July, 2019, 33 states will honor the NCSP credential as evidence of eligibility for credentialing as a school psychologist when the other state-specific requirements are met. The NASP webpage information about the NCSP is included in our list of resources in Table 2.2.

American Board of Professional Psychology: Board Certification

Another route to ensure and convey qualifications in a specific area is through the American Board of Professional Psychology (ABPP). ABPP recognizes 15 specialties within the areas of practice in psychology including school psychology. The ABPP is a credential and not a license. It is intended to indicate advanced specialization and evaluation by peer review to affirm the professional's skills in that specialized area. The specialty area of School Psychology has its own board within the ABPP, known as the American Board of School Psychology.

Bilingual Certification

While the diversity in our student populations is vastly increasing, there is a dearth of school psychology programs to provide adequate training for effectively serving bilingual youth. Unfortunately, bilingual certification is not offered in many states, and the requirements vary, as does who is eligible to apply for certification. According to information summarized on NASP's webpage about bilingual certification, only two states have formal bilingual certification routes for practitioners. The NASP bilingual website is included in the resources list in Table 2.2. As one example, the New York State Department of Education offers "Extension" Certificates, one of which is Bilingual, which can be attached to a valid base certificate, such as a professional pupil's certification. Additional training and assessments are required. In New York, this certificate would allow the school psychologist to work with bilingual youth. NASP's website also includes a link to training programs with a multicultural focus and a list of school psychology programs with a bilingual specialization.

Neuropsychology: Board Certification

Neuropsychology has become a growing specialty area within school psychology, referred to as school neuropsychology, which emphasizes examination of processing deficits to more effectively connect assessment data to evidence-based interventions. There is a more comprehensive focus on neurological disorders, neuropsychological assessments, and related interventions. School psychologists and other psychologists who work with children can complete the School Neuropsychology Post-Graduate Certification Program and receive a certificate upon successful completion of the training. Certification from this program provides eligibility to apply for a diplomate credential in School Neuropsychology from the American Board of School Neuropsychology, LLC. This credential represents advanced training and competency in school neuropsychological practices. While it is not licensure to practice, the credential provides an added area of expertise to your skillset.

Board Certified Behavior Analyst

Although it is not required in most school psychology training programs, there is growing demand for skills or credentials in applied behavior analysis. The Board Certified Behavior Analyst is a distinct credential post-degree that requires specific types of coursework and training, as well as supervised experience. This specific credential may augment or offer some similar types of flexibility for faculty who plan to focus on behavioral intervention research and are not interested in pursuing the license in psychology at the level of independent practice, or if they are planning to only practice in school settings with the EdS-equivalent level state-issued license to practice school psychology.

Snapshots of the Journey to Obtain Licensure

The route to licensure can look different from professional to professional for a number of personal, economic, or career considerations. It is probably most typical to seek credentialing soon after completion of the degree. All credentials and licensure options require post-degree investment of time, money, and effort.

Kisha's Story

Postdoctoral experience was critical to obtaining general psychology licensure for me. One reason I chose to attend a doctoral program as a student, knowing I would pursue licensure, was the flexibility it would give me to work in different settings. A clinical postdoctoral experience provided me with opportunities to (a) gain more in-depth counseling experiences with children, adolescents, and adults; (b) experience working with the schools from an outside agency perspective; (c) engage in professional development activities; and (d) accrue additional hours towards licensure. I applied for a few postdoctoral positions after internship but was unsuccessful in obtaining one. At that point, I decided to apply for academic positions so that I could continue with my research and teaching. After I had started the interview process for academic positions, I received an offer from one of the postdoctoral positions to which I had applied. I accepted the postdoctoral position and notified the universities to which I had applied. One of the institutions I had begun interviews with was still interested in having me complete an on-campus interview. I was offered the faculty position with the stipulation that I would start after I completed my postdoctoral residency. I was very fortunate to have been offered an academic position that would allow me to complete my postdoctoral training and pursue licensure before starting.

Completing my postdoctoral training before entering academia was a significant benefit. I had support in studying and completing the Examination for Professional Practice in Psychology (EPPP) and the jurisprudence exams from my postdoctoral training site and the academic program. Additionally, I was able to provide support and supervision in field-based practicum experiences for our students. While I ultimately did not continue to engage in private practice, I know that it is still an option for me when I am ready. I have had opportunities to participate in various independent evaluations, which also allowed me to engage graduate students in, providing them with a unique experience. Licensure also reminds me that I have flexibility to pursue other job opportunities, I can open up my own practice should I choose to do so, and I have mobility.

I think it would have been very beneficial to study for the EPPP towards the end of internship and take the EPPP shortly after graduation. My postdoctoral position in private practice was a “job” that likely did not have the same opportunities that other postdoctoral positions may have had. For example, there was not an emphasis on research nor opportunities to develop research projects, which likely impacted my productivity when I entered my academic position. The emphasis of my postdoctoral position was on practice and professional development, which did contribute to my practical experiences and knowledge base. Knowing what I know now, I would have asked to add research into my postdoctoral contract. In hindsight, I am sure that the Clinic Director would have supported that, and likely would have engaged in research with me. It is critical to have support for completing your hours, getting supervision, and developing advanced competency while you are working. Something you can do is ask for that support as part of your startup package (e.g., pay for the EPPP and jurisprudence exam costs, purchase study materials, and provide you with supervision). Information discussed earlier in this chapter can be used to support the case for why it benefits both you and your program and department if you are licensed. Also, it never hurts to ask for what you need!

Janay’s Story

I obtained licensure relatively soon after I completed my PhD, before I started a tenure-track academic position. I made the choice to pursue licensure to allow for career flexibility, and it ended up enhancing my marketability and increased my job satisfaction in all my academic positions since then. I enjoy research, teaching, and clinical practice. As soon as I completed my doctoral degree, I started in a formal postdoctoral research scientist position on a clinical research project, and my role included obtaining supervision for licensure. I immediately started studying for the EPPP. I was planning on a career in academia, and I also considered perhaps working in a private practice a few hours per week. At the time I was completing my postdoctoral experience, I was somewhat geographically restricted in a dual-career household. I was unsure which academic jobs would be available for me when my postdoctoral experience ended. Seeking licensure seemed like a reasonable way to ensure my ongoing employment after postdoc. I studied for the EPPP while completing my postdoctoral experience. I met the licensure requirements due to built-in supervision as part of my postdoctoral experience.

About 3 years after I finished my PhD I started in a tenure-track position, and I started the position as a licensed psychologist. As a faculty member, there have been numerous occasions when my license was a huge asset. Having a license has helped me establish collaborations with research partners in the community, appease institutional review board members about safety plans of research participants due to my license and training, pursue an applied clinical research study, and provide supervision to students who would otherwise have struggled to find qualified practicum supervisors. I am currently program director of an APA-accredited and NASP-approved PhD program in School Psychology, and it has been an asset to hold a license as a health service psychologist. I think the demands of conducting research and getting publications as a new faculty member while also pursuing licensure and studying for the EPPP

would be overwhelming. It would have been impossible for me, personally, while also caring for young children, which I was doing during my postdoctoral position. Getting my license prior to starting an academic job was one of the best decisions I made in my career.

Other Stories

As members of a small professional network in academia in school psychology, we are aware of the stories of some of our peers who had different paths, timelines, and reasons for obtaining licensure. In one situation, a colleague went straight from PhD completion to a faculty position. The colleague did not have a credential for practicing as a school psychologist or license at the level of independent practice as a health service psychologist, nor was it part of their job description at the time. This person earned tenure as a faculty member at their university. Some time later, in response to several licensed faculty member retirements, the faculty member was asked to seek licensure at the level of independent practice in part to address accreditation standards. Getting licensed required getting additional postdoctoral training and supervision in the jurisdiction the faculty member was located, plus passing the EPPP. This was quite a few years post-degree. The individual was able to negotiate to get release time to obtain the required postdoctoral supervision in that jurisdiction and time off for studying to take the EPPP. The process was unpleasant, stressful, and difficult, even with some release time. Learning new skills and returning to providing direct services for 1 or 2 days per week was humbling and time-consuming. Studying for the EPPP after being out of school for more than a decade was laborious. This individual did end up with a license at the independent practice level as a psychologist. This colleague conveyed to the authors how they wished they had sought licensure back when they first finished their PhD.

Another story, which reflects the ultimate back-up plan, is about what happens when someone seeking tenure does not get a favorable tenure decision. If that happens, some will seek a new job at a different university, and others will leave academia. This particular colleague was intending to be a faculty member when starting graduate school and planned for an academic career. After completing a doctoral degree from a prestigious APA-accredited program and completing an APA-accredited internship, they took a tenure-track job in a state where faculty members did not need a license to teach applied courses in a faculty role. Several unfortunate events delayed research projects, which resulted in difficulties meeting the publication expectations. In addition, there was little research mentoring or support available. Ultimately, this person was not granted tenure. By that time, there were additional personal considerations that came with some geographic restrictions. This colleague decided to leave academia and pursue private practice, but they were not yet licensed. In the year after the unfavorable tenure decision, this person needed to hurry and obtain postdoctoral supervision and pass the EPPP. This person was able to accomplish those tasks but with considerable stress and pressure to become licensed by the end of their faculty contract in order to be employable. This person was glad to have the option to leave academia and obtain a license. However, this person wished that pursuing licensure had not occurred with the pressure of the end of a job contract. This person would advise anyone who considers private practice as an alternative job path to become licensed prior to taking a faculty job in the event that tenure does not go well or their career interests shift.

Timing of Seeking Licensure

Based on anecdotal and personal experiences, there are more advantages than disadvantages to faculty seeking licensure and certification as soon as possible post-degree. Pursuing licensure at the earliest possible time, once eligible, is preferable to waiting for a number of reasons. One of the main considerations for seeking licensure immediately post-degree is the potential for

unforeseen shifts and the urgency of responding when those shifts occur. Requirements for licensure may change over time. Licensure takes some time to attain, and the need to provide services may be time sensitive. The available licensed faculty affiliated with an academic program could suddenly change, or the chronic shortage of school psychology practitioners could impact the availability of qualified site supervisors. The faculty member may experience unforeseen professional, financial, personal, or geographic constraints. Faculty interests or career paths may also shift over time.

Costs Associated with Seeking Credentials or Licensure

Licensure comes at a cost. The EPPP fee is approximately \$600 and has been a stable cost for over 10 years. The current exam is known as the EPPP “Part 1—Knowledge” exam. A “Part 2—Skills” portion is in development and has fees as well. Early beta testing of the EPPP Part 2 has a \$100 fee to sit for the exam. An early adopter fee of \$300 is set for those taking the exam through December 31, 2021. The fee increases to \$450 per sitting in January 2022. Licensure boards would determine which forms of the EPPP they require. States may decide to require Part 1 or Parts 1 and 2. If states require Part 1 and Part 2, the total cost would eventually be \$1,050 for the applicant seeking licensure. Many individuals invest in test preparation materials, which can cost around \$1,200. Studying for the exam is recommended. There is a handbook for EPPP exam candidates, available in English and in French, at no cost through Association of State and Provincial Psychology Boards (ASPPB). Once the exam is passed, there are no ongoing fees for the EPPP, but there would be application fees for the state-level licensure-granting agency and annual licensure renewal fees. These fees vary widely by state (from a low end of \$150 to upwards of \$500).

The credentialing process includes fees, too. The NASP NCSP credential application fee ranges from \$60 to \$210, depending on membership status and time elapsed since the terminal degree was awarded. There are annual fees of \$99 to maintain the NCSP credential. The Behavior Analyst Certification Board application fee is \$245, and recertification every 2 years has a fee of \$215–\$290. We encourage making use of the resources links (presented in Table 2.2) to specific organizations to further explore costs and fees.

Recommendations and Resources

The licensure process is complex and varies by state and jurisdiction. The single best resource for all doctoral-level licensure-related information is the Association of State and Provincial Psychology Boards, or ASPPB (see <https://www.asppb.net>). Licensure steps after earning the doctoral degree include passing national exams and demonstrating knowledge of state/jurisdiction laws. This web resource includes information about the EPPP (Part 1 and Part 2), offers contact information for state and provincial licensure boards, and displays licensure and reciprocity criteria by state and jurisdiction. In general, the steps to licensure are similar from state to state. Those steps are typically post-degree and include accumulating and documenting postdoctoral supervised hours in some states, requesting permission to take the EPPP, and taking the state jurisprudence exam.

Mobility Considerations

If there is a possibility that you could be mobile, it is a good idea to bank your documents in a credentials bank (e.g., transcripts and letters of recommendation). There are options for credentialing banks, some of which provide discounted offers for students to start banking their information. The two most widely used options are the ASPPB and the National Register.

The links to these credential banks are provided in the resources section of this chapter. There are several benefits to banking your training documents. For example, transcripts, university verification of terminal degree, supervisor verification (e.g., for completing internships or postdoctoral hours) would be kept in your bank. As a result, you do not have to go back for those verifications again. This can be critical as sometimes a supervisor retires, is deceased, or in some cases, a program closes and it may be difficult to track down the documents. The longer the time period between completing the degree and postdoctoral training experiences, the more challenging it can be to obtain the necessary documentation for licensure. Additionally, you do not need to constantly request transcripts, verification letters, or letters of recommendation if you apply for licensure in different states or certification in different specialty areas; your documents would be housed in one place and easily sent out as needed.

Summary

Overall, the decision to seek licensure or a credential is a personal one. The stories shared here show some of the options and choices, and there are many other stories out there reflecting a wide array of perspectives. There are many universities that will hire faculty who are not licensed and may not be license-eligible without additional training or supervision. While the state rules vary on number of hours of supervision required and whether post-degree supervision is necessary, all states require passing scores on the EPPP for licensure in health service psychology. The timing of when an individual would be eligible for each step toward licensure varies in each jurisdiction. There are many credentials for professionals who wish to demonstrate their training in specific areas. Obtaining licensure or credentialing is indeed a cost, both in time and money. Conversely, holding a license or credential in the areas of training or as evidence of specialized knowledge and skill can be an asset to the individual's career, to their university and program, and to their students.

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