

GEORGIA BOARD OF EXAMINERS OF PSYCHOLOGISTS

Frequently Asked Questions

I. Applicants:

Q. I've heard that the Licensing Board has changed the requirements for the Supervised Work Experience that is required for licensure. Can you explain what the change is?

A. Yes, the Board has changed the requirements for the Supervised Work Experience (henceforth SWE). The old rules required that you submit a SWE contract within 30 days of starting the SWE. The **new rule** allows for you to submit such a contract within 30 days for preapproval, but no longer requires you to do so until the end of the SWE. Applicants should be aware that the Board reserves the right to disallow all or part of the contract if not preapproved, so obtaining preapproval may be prudent. See Board rule 510-2-.05

Q. My doctoral program is not APA accredited, but essentially meets all the coursework criteria that APA requires. Will the Board accept my application with a degree from this type of program?

A. No, the Board requires that all applicants by examination (initial licensing) have doctoral degrees from APA accredited programs with the exception of international and I/O applicants. I/O applicants who have either graduated from an I/O Psychology program which is listed in the *Designated Doctoral Programs in Psychology* published by ASPPB and the National Register, or who submit documentation showing they meet 15 of the 25 competencies set forth in *Guidelines For Education and Training At the Doctoral Level In Industrial/Organizational Psychology* (available at www.apa.org Society for Industrial/Organizational Psychology, Division 14, 1999) will be deemed to have met the educational requirements. International applicants are considered on a case by case basis. See Board rule 510-2-.04.

Q. I've heard that I can take the national licensing exam (EPPP) before I finish my doctoral degree in Georgia. Is this true? What are the requirements? How do I go about doing this?

A. No, this is no longer true. You must have completed all of the doctoral requirements including the internship before you may take the EPPP. This change is in accordance with ASPPB's policies. See Board rule 510-2-.01.

II. Licensed Psychologists:

Q. 40 hours of continuing education are required every 2 years to renew my license, and that there are 5 categories, or areas, that CE hours fall into. What is the difference between Areas III and IV, or, how many hours count for the conventions (Area II) I attend?

A. The Areas (I through V) were developed to help organize and categorize type of CE hours. We have adopted this system so we can track your CE hours too.

□ Area I is for actual courses you might take at an educational institution or for a program of supervision (including peer supervision) that you do if it includes readings and has the appropriate documentation. This category also includes seminars and approved courses given by recognized universities, hospitals, and training institutions. It does not include courses the licensee teaches (see Area V).

□ Area II is for conventions you attend, either at a psychology convention or other relevant convention. You can count 3 hours per day of convention attendance. If all you did at the convention is attend one 3 hour workshop, you can either count that workshop under Area III, or count it under Area 2 as your 3 hours. If you attended a 3 hour workshop and also attended other professional activities lasting at least 3 hours at the convention, then you can count 3 hours of workshop under Area III and 3 hours of convention activities under Area II for that day. You can never count more than 6 hours a day (3 hours of workshop under Area III and 3 hours under Area II) for any convention day under Area II.

□ Area III is for workshops you attend in person while at a convention. This category includes workshops at conventions, hospitals, and training institutions. These must last a minimum of three hours, be attended in person, cover a professional issue or topic, and be made available to the psychological community in general.

□ Area IV is for APA or GPA accredited workshops you attend in person that are not associated with a convention.

□ Area V is for self study and all on line instruction falls in this area whether it is APA accredited or not. This category includes use of audiotapes, videotapes, books, and journals. This category also includes conducting a workshop or academic course for the **first time**, for preparation of articles for publication for the **first time**, and non interactive online CE. Non interactive online CE is defined as an activity in which the participant interacts only with the computer. (The course may have been recorded.)

An additional maximum of 6 hours credit is allowed for interactive online CE in real time which will allow a maximum of 16 hours total in Area V. Interactive CE is defined as an activity in which the participant interacts with a live person, who is the instructor, and may also interact with other participants through a computer either through audio or audio/video channels, in real time. Real time is defined as an activity in which both the instructor and participant are on the computer at the same time. See Section 510-8-.02

Q. Does the licensing board have rules about the specific content of patient records?

A. Yes, The licensing Board has adopted the 2003 APA code of Ethics as part of its new rules. You may want to refer to Section 6 of that code about record keeping. Further the Board has a supplemental standard about record keeping. It is Board rule 510-5-.04 Maintenance and Retention of Records, and reads as follows:

(1) Records include information that may be used to document the nature, delivery, progress, and results of psychological services. The psychologist who renders professional services shall maintain records that include the following:

- (a) Records of psychological services include:
1. identifying data (e.g., name, client ID number);
 2. contact information (e.g., phone number, address, emergency contact);
 3. fees and billing information;
 4. where appropriate, guardianship or conservatorship status;
 5. documentation of informed consent or assent for treatment (Ethics Code 3.10);
 6. documentation of waivers of confidentiality and authorization or consent for release of information (Ethics Code 4.05);
 7. documentation of any mandated disclosure of confidential information (e.g., report of child abuse, release secondary to a court order);
 8. complaint, diagnosis, or basis for request for services;

9. plan for services, updated as appropriate (e.g., treatment plan, supervision plan, intervention schedule, community interventions, consultation contracts);
10. relevant health and developmental history;
11. date of service and duration of session;
12. types of services (e.g., consultation, assessment, treatment, training);
13. nature of professional intervention or contact (e.g., type of treatment, referral, letters, e-mail, phone contacts);
14. formal or informal assessment of client status.

(2) Psychologists are aware of relevant federal state and local laws and regulations governing records. Laws and regulations supersede requirement of these rules. In the absence of such laws and regulations, complete records are maintained for a minimum of seven years after the last date of service delivery for adults. If the client is a minor, the record period is extended until three years after the age of majority.

(3) The psychologist shall store and dispose of written, electronic, and other records of patients and clients in such a manner as to ensure their confidentiality.” See section 510-5-.04.

Q. I’m retired and would like to do volunteer work in the profession. Is there a way that I can do this?

A. Yes. The licensing board has a new rule related to volunteer psychologists. A license by consent order by the board may be granted to persons who are retired from the practice of psychology or have an inactive license and who are not currently engaged in the practice of psychology either full time or part time and who have prior to retirement or attaining inactive status, maintained full licensure in psychology in good standing. All fees for this license are waived. See Board rule 510-9-.04 for the requirements necessary to apply for this license.

Q. I am a psychologist who is licensed in another jurisdiction and needs to come to Georgia for a short period of time to conduct professional services. Is there any way to do this without getting licensed in Georgia?

A. Yes. Georgia has adopted the Interjurisdictional Practice Certificate (IPC) offered by ASPPB as a mechanism for the temporary practice of psychology in Georgia. Individuals who hold this certificate must e-mail the Board the dates, location, and nature of the intended service and have ASPPB verify their IPC status. Individuals who do not hold this certificate must also send verification from all jurisdictions where they are licensed of their disciplinary status prior to offering any services in Georgia. Then you may offer services for up to 30 days per calendar year. See board rule 510-9-.03.

III. The General Public:

Q. How can I tell if a therapist that I am seeing is a licensed psychologist or not?

A. First, it is perfectly OK to ask your therapist about his or her credentials and if he or she is a licensed psychologist. You can also access this information at the web site www.sos.ga.gov/plb by looking under license verification and scrolling to the appropriate name. It is illegal for a person to misrepresent himself or herself as a psychologist who treats clients if he or she is not licensed. All licensed psychologists are listed in the verification file.

Q. What is psychological testing and who can do it?

A. Psychological testing is defined, by law as administering, and interpreting tests of mental abilities, aptitudes, interests, and personality characteristics for such purposes as psychological classification or evaluation, or for education or vocational placement, or for such purposes as psychological counseling, guidance, or readjustment. It is further defined as the use of assessment instruments that measure mental abilities, personality characteristics, or neuropsychological functioning in order to diagnose, render opinions, treat, classify or evaluate mental and nervous disorders and illnesses including organic brain disorders and brain damage. See Board rule 510-10-.03.

Only licensed psychologists are permitted by law to conduct psychological testing. Licensed psychologists may employ appropriately trained people to administer and score psychological tests, but the licensed psychologist is the one who is ultimately responsible for the interpretation of the results and for how the test results are used.

Q. I have been seeing a therapist who is a licensed psychologist and recently have gotten worried about some of the things that have been happening in the sessions. What should I do?

A. It is always appropriate to discuss whatever feelings you are having with your therapist. If you don't feel comfortable doing this, or after doing this continue to have significant worries then you might want to change therapists. If you have a complaint about the ethical conduct of a therapist and wish to report that complaint to the Board, you may call (478-207-2440) or visit the webpage www.sos.ga.gov/plb to access a complaint form and the Board will investigate your complaint. Any kind of sexual contact or activity between a therapist and a client is considered unethical and illegal. This kind of behavior should be reported to the Board so the Board can take the appropriate actions to protect the public from the harmful effects of such activity