

## **ORAL EXAMINATION**

Once the Practice Samples are accepted, the Candidate is eligible for the Oral Examination, which is the final phase of the ABRP credentialing process. Registration forms for the Oral Examination will be retrieved on the ABPP website (<http://www.abpp.org/i4a/pages/index.cfm?pageid=3361>) after notification of acceptance of the Practice Samples. The fee for this part of the examination is \$450.

The Oral Examination in Rehabilitation Psychology is the final step of the ABRP and American Board of Professional Psychology's (ABPP) certification in Rehabilitation Psychology. An Examining Committee, consisting of trained Rehabilitation Psychology examiners, is assembled when the ABRP Board decides there are an adequate number of Candidates who are ready to take the Oral Examination. The date and location of Oral Examination will be decided by the Board.

The Oral Exam will present candidates with situations in which they will demonstrate their professional experience, knowledge, and skill. The oral examination process is designed to afford the examiners an opportunity to evaluate both the breadth and the depth of candidates' professional knowledge and functioning. While correct answers are important, the examiners will work to discover how the candidates thinks about, evaluates and manages the neuropsychological problems that come to us via our patients. A well reasoned and scientifically defensible diagnostic conclusion or treatment plan will be more favorably received than one that is technically correct but based on weak knowledge, an incomplete evaluation, poorly planned treatment, or faulty reasoning.

The examination takes approximately four hours and consists of three parts, each conducted by a different examiner. The areas examined consist of clinical case vignettes, review of practice samples and professional involvement, and ethics. After spending the allotted time with the candidate, each examiner will record his/her ratings.

## Oral Examination Procedures

All candidates meet before the exam and at the conclusion of the exam in a room that is reserved for them. After the entire examination team is introduced, the team is excused and the candidates are oriented to the oral examination process by the secretary/exam chair and one or two board officers. A final check is made to assure that no candidate is examined by an oral examiner with whom the candidate may have had a substantive relationship that could bias the outcome – either negatively or positively.

Before the examination begins candidates will be required to sign an **Oral Exam Statement of Confidentiality** agreement. By signing this agreement candidates affirm (1) that they will not discuss specifics of the oral examination or reveal its contents to others at any time either during or after your exam, and (2) that they will not reveal the identify of any other candidate who is scheduled for examination, (3) they will not remove any examination materials from the room. However, this agreement does not preclude discussion of the oral examination procedures, as they are outlined in this manual.

Each of the three oral examinations occurs in a separate exam room. The entire examination is typically conducted in a suites hotel with each examiner utilizing the meeting portion of their hotel suite for the examination. The candidate travels to the exam rooms with time left between examinations for travel to the next room. The time that is allotted for each exercise is approximately 40 to 55 minutes.

Candidates may bring a pen and paper to each examination exercise, but any notes that are made prior to examination on a vignette must be given to the examiner at the end of that examination. No other material may be brought to the vignette, practice sample or ethics portion of the examination. However, the candidates may bring a copy of their Practice Sample and any other relevant material to the Practice Sample portion of the oral examination. The ethics examination involves reviewing a total of 3 paragraph long ethical vignettes selected by the examiner for a few minutes and explaining the ethical issues present for approximately 5 to 8 minutes. The candidate can write notes if they desire but must give the examiner any notes at the end of the examination.

At the end of the four-hour examination period, all Candidates meet with the secretary/exam chair and one or two board members for approximately 15 minutes of debriefing during which feedback is solicited related to their Oral Examination experience, the Oral Examination Process, and details about time and manner in which they can expect their Examination results. Information is also provided to Candidates about the appeals process should the outcome be “No Pass.” The Candidates are free to leave following this final debriefing period.

### **Post Examination Deliberations and Voting**

The examiners meet and discuss each candidate whom they have examined. Although each examiner has rated the candidate during his/her particular portion of the examination, the decision to pass or fail is an overall decision of the examiners, reached after a thorough discussion of the candidate's performance across all three parts of the Oral Examination. The candidate does not pass or fail the individual parts of the Oral Examination.

#### **A. Outcome of the Oral Examination**

The names of candidates who pass the Oral Examination are presented to ABPP along with the recommendation that these candidates be awarded ABPP certification in Rehabilitation Psychology. If approved, ABPP then so informs the candidate and arranges for the award of the diploma in Rehabilitation Psychology. Candidates who pass their Oral Exam are awarded ABPP certification in Rehabilitation Psychology and become American Academy of Rehabilitation Psychology (AARP) members.

Candidates who do not pass their Oral Exam may re-take the exam provided that the seven-year limit has not expired. A candidate may take the Oral Examination no more than two times in the seven-year time period of their candidacy.

## **STUDY/PREPARATION RESOURCES**

The ABRP Board does not recommend specific study preparation resources. Candidates may consider utilizing the following resources in preparation. The newest edition of The Handbook of Rehabilitation Psychology (2010) by Frank, Rosenthal and Caplan (Eds.) contains the latest information related to specialty foci, modalities of care, research outcomes, and professional standards. The Rehabilitation Psychology Listserv ([www.Division22.org](http://www.Division22.org)) and the Rehabilitation Psychology website are available and helpful resources. Rehabilitation Psychology ([www.apa.org/journals/rep](http://www.apa.org/journals/rep)) is the journal of the Division of Rehabilitation Psychology. Review of recent issues of Rehabilitation Psychology may be particularly helpful. Finally, as noted in the Writing the Practice Sample Cases section, familiarity with the core principles of the field that are enumerated in Physical Disability: A Psychosocial Approach by Beatrice Wright is necessary for completion of the practice sample. These core principles are available on the ABRP website as a PDF document entitled: Rehabilitation Psychology Core Principles. The entire text can be accessed through the American Psychological Association website under the print on demand books service.