THE AMERICAN BOARD OF FORENSIC PSYCHOLOGY, INC. (ABFP)

A SPECIALTY BOARD OF THE AMERICAN BOARD OF PROFESSIONAL PSYCHOLOGY

Introduction to Application and Examination Procedures

This a brief introduction and overview of application and examination procedures of the American Board of Forensic Psychology (ABFP). This document is one of a number that have been prepared to inform potential ABFP applicants and candidates about the application, eligibility, and examination process. For more complete and detailed information, including hard copies of these documents, check www.abfp.com, www.abpp.org, the forensic psychology menu, or contact the ABFP Executive Director:

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The examination process consists of successfully completing three steps:

1) Application and Initial Screening for Eligibility as a Candidate by ABPP and ABFP

2) The Written Examination

3) The Oral Examination, based upon two Practice Samples, to assess:

   a. Knowledge in the candidate’s Primary Areas of Practice; and
   b. Forensic Ethics and Professional Practice

1) Initial Screening for Eligibility by ABPP and ABFP. Applicants for ABPP candidacy with specialization in forensic psychology must meet general requirements applied to all ABPP candidates and additional requirements specific to the forensic specialization. General ABPP requirements are described in detail in the ABPP generic application materials. Simplified, they require: a doctoral degree from a program in professional psychology (e.g., clinical psychology or counseling psychology) from a graduate program that was APA-approved at the time the degree was awarded, or that offered a curriculum that was the equivalent of APA requirements; completion of an appropriate APA-approved internship, or an internship that offered the equivalent of APA requirements; current engagement in professional work in the relevant specialty, and evidence of continuing education during the postdoctoral years; and appropriate licensing for psychological practice in the state in which the candidate practices, or in some state if practicing in a federal facility. Requirements specific to forensic specialization
additionally include: at least 100 hours of formal education, direct supervision or continuing education in forensic psychology; and at least 1000 hours of experience in forensic psychology obtained in either of two ways (i.e., completion of a full-time, at least one year, postdoctoral training program in forensic psychology, meeting curriculum requirements consistent with APA’s definition of forensic psychology as a specialty, or during a minimum period of five years, at least four years of which are postdoctoral).

2) The Written Examination. The written examination provides a structured, objective method for assessing the depth and breadth of the candidate’s knowledge of forensic psychology. The breadth of forensic knowledge is assessed by an objective, written examination that include questions pertaining to eight major topic areas of forensic psychology:

1) Ethics, Guidelines, and Professional Issues
2) Law, Precedents, Court Rules, and Civil and Criminal Procedure
3) Testing and Assessment, Judgment and Bias, and Examination Issues
4) Civil Competence, Individual Rights and Liberties
5) Juvenile, Parenting, and Family/Domestic/Matrimonial Matters
6) Civil Damages, Personal Injury, Disability, and Workers Compensation
7) Criminal Competence
8) Criminal Responsibility

The written examination consists of 200 four-foil multiple choice questions and must be completed in no more than 3.5 hours. The written examination questions cover a variety of content areas cited above. These proctored exams are regularly offered in a variety of locations around the country and in conjunction with American Academy of Forensic Psychology Continuing Education seminars. Prior to taking the written examination a registration/fee of $200.00 must be submitted to the ABPP Central Office.

3) The Oral Examination Including the Practice Samples. The candidate then participates in an Oral Examination centers upon the candidate’s two Practice Samples. These Practice Samples are seen as exemplars of the candidate’s forensic work, and form the basis for questions concerning the candidate’s competencies in the two primary areas of practice as well as forensic ethics.

The Practice Samples. The candidate is required to submit the “Forensic Practice Sample” (e.g., forensic examination, peer reviewed article, forensic treatment protocol) along with supplementary materials. Each of the two “Practice Samples” now consists of four parts: a table of contents, a curriculum vitae or resume, the “forensic practice sample” (e.g., forensic examination, peer reviewed article, forensic treatment protocol), and supplementary materials which typically will include test data and relevant collateral information, publications, case law, and statutes. The Practice Sample should include sufficient case material for examiners to understand what the candidate did and the factual basis for the candidate’s conclusions. Prior to or when submitting the Practice Samples the registration/fee of $250.00 should be sent to the ABPP Central Office.
The Oral Examination. Once a candidate has passed the written examination, the remainder of the Board certification process is focused on the candidate’s primary areas of forensic practice. The two primary areas are reflected in the candidate’s choice of Practice Samples and the candidate’s stated areas of practice. In addition, the candidate will be asked questions about ethics as they apply to the Practice Samples and to forensic practice in general. For psychologists, the paradigm is familiar: this new approach is similar to the later stages of graduate education in which the doctoral student completes general examinations, followed by a dissertation and its defense. Prior to arranging or upon arranging the oral examination the registration/fee of $450.00 should be forwarded to the ABPP Central Office.

Each of us on the Board, and each member of the Academy of Forensic Psychology encourage you to apply and wish you success. We will gladly provide you assistance and support in helping you successfully complete this instructive and rewarding process. The goal of certifications in Forensic Psychology is a high one, and we believe that you will find it gratifying to be a Board Certified Forensic Psychologist.
APPLICATION AND ADMISSION TO CANDIDACY

When the psychologist interested in certification considers the eligibility requirements and believes that he or she meets these requirements, the psychologist is invited to submit an application. The application may be found on www.abpp.org in the Certification Process Area, then the forensic specialty, click-on application-candidacy. The Application registration fee of $125.00 should be submitted to the ABPP Central Office. Upon submission of the application, the applicant must arrange for transcripts of all graduate coursework to be sent directly to the ABPP Central Office. When all necessary documents have been received, the Executive Officer conducts whatever investigation seems necessary to provide appropriate information for review and appraisal. This includes sending an inquiry to the State Board of Examiners of Psychologists. When all credentials have been assembled, the Board will seek, on the basis of the record, clear evidence that the applicant meet its standards in accordance each of the following areas:

A. Adequacy and extent of basic training;
B. Amount, breadth, and quality of professional experience; and
C. Special competence.

When the Board determines that the applicant has met its qualifying standards, he or she will be considered a Candidate and will be notified of admission to candidacy.

POLICIES CONCERNING CANDIDACY AND EXAMINATION

The Board expects that the conditions of each examination will be consistent with the principles and standards stated in the examination manual. Recognizing that exceptions may occur, the Board has a procedure for appeals. If an applicant believes that the examination was not conducted in an appropriate and fair manner, he or she may request a review. Such request should be submitted within 30 days of the notice of failure. It shall include a definitive statement of factors and conditions considered by the applicant as interfering with or inconsistent with an adequate evaluation. Such a Board review may have two possible outcomes: (1) nullification of the examination; or (2) a confirmation of the No Award decision. Applicants cannot be awarded the Diploma as a result of the review.

POLICIES CONCERNING THE RELATIONSHIP OF CANDIDATES TO THE BOARDS

In the past, both ABFP and ABPP have had some difficulties with psychologists who are not ABFP or ABPP Diplomates, but who represent their relationships to either or both Boards in ways that these Boards find unacceptable. It is the position of ABFP and ABPP that any such representation may constitute an ethical violation and may result in termination of the Applicant’s application process. The following information is presented so that Applicants and Candidates can avoid an unethical representation of their relationship to these Boards.
Neither Board recognizes any term or designation for referring to a psychologist who has merely approached the Board seeking information or requesting an application. Once the Board has received an application, the Board refers to that person – in internal communication only – as an Applicant. An Applicant should use that designation only when communicating with the Board. Applicants may not indicate to anyone else that they are an Applicant or a Candidate for board certification by the ABFP and ABPP, nor may they do so on a resume, C.V., or any written or oral statement of qualifications. Additionally, ABPP and ABFP do not to use, authorize, or recognize the term “Board Eligible”. Applicants may not use this term to represent any relationship or status with either Board, nor may Applicants represent to any outside person or entity that they have met the minimum requirements as an Applicant of the Boards, or that they are “Board Eligible” for either Board.

Once an application has been approved, the Applicant’s status – for purposes of internal communication only - is then changed to “Candidate for Specialty Certification”. “Applicants” and “Candidates for Specialty Certification” do not have any formal relationship with either Board that they can use other than in communications to the Boards. After they have been notified in writing by the National Chair of Examinations that they have successfully passed the entire board certification process, they may represent themselves as a Certified in the Specialty Forensic Psychology (or a Diplomate) of the American Board of Forensic Psychology, a Diplomate of the American Board of Professional Psychology, and also as a Fellow of the American Academy of Forensic Psychology.

To comply with these requirements, Applicants should never advertise themselves or represent themselves as having any relationship to the Board until such a time as they are notified that they have passed the entire process. Any use of the term “Board Eligible” by those who have been admitted to candidacy for the examination, or others, is inappropriate and may result in procedures to terminate the applicant’s candidacy.

Should you need any further information regarding any of the information discussed above, please contact the Executive Officer of the American Board of Professional Psychology.

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATION AND STANDARDS OF PRACTICE

The Board will suspend action on any applicant in whose case allegations are being investigated by the Ethics Committee of the American Psychological Association, the American Psychological Society, a state board of psychology examiners, or the ABPP Ethics Committee. It is the applicant’s responsibility to notify the Board of any prior adverse ethical or licensure determinations and any pending allegations and their resolution. The Board may initiate procedures to revoke the Diploma of an individual if it is presented with information indicating that the person may have committed misconduct subject to the Ethics Rules and Procedures of ABPP.
THE WRITTEN EXAMINATION IN FORENSIC PSYCHOLOGY

A. How the Written Examination Fits into the Diplomate Process.

Following the review and acceptance of the candidate’s credentials by the American Board of Professional Psychology and the American Board of Forensic Psychology, the written examination is the next step. Upon successful completion of this examination, the candidate is invited to submit two Practice Samples (see below) that will serve as a partial basis for the Oral Examination, the final phase of the process.

The written examination serves to ensure that persons seeking certification in Forensic Psychology possess sufficient breadth of forensic knowledge.

B. Examination Scheduling and Time Limitations

The fee for the written examination is $200 and must be pre-paid to ABPP. The Candidate must take the written examination within 12 months of being accepted for candidacy. The ABFP Corresponding Secretary is responsible for scheduling, administering, and scoring the examination, and providing results to the Candidate and ABFP Board of Directors.

In order to facilitate administration of the written examination, a number of ABFP Diplomates have agreed to administer the examination in their professional offices. These examination sites are geographically distributed around the country so as to reduce travel costs. Candidates should contact the ABFP Corresponding Secretary to schedule an examination.

Each candidate has three chances to pass the written examination. If a Candidate does not pass the written examination on the first try, a second attempt may be made no earlier than six months and no later than 18 months after the candidate was notified of the results of the first examination. If a Candidate does not pass the written examination on the second attempt, a third attempt may be made no earlier than six months and no later than 18 months after the candidate was notified of the results of the second examination. If the Candidate does not pass the written examination on the third attempt, candidacy is terminated. The psychologist is eligible to reapply for candidacy 12 months after the third examination has been failed.

Once passed, the written examination need only be taken again if the Candidate does not obtain the forensic diploma within four years of passing the written examination (i.e., if the Candidate does not successfully defend two written Practice Samples as part of the oral examination).
C. The Written Examination

The Written Examination

This “closed book” examination currently consists of two hundred (200) multiple choice items with a total of four (4) foils per item. At the current time, for any one form of the test, the test consists of “validated items” and “experimental items” which are developed and reviewed on a regular basis to allow for re-examination and creation of alternate forms/versions of the examination. Please note that the format of the examination may be modified at any time.

The Candidate is allowed 3.5 hours to complete the examination, which may be administered individually or in a group setting. The examination score is calculated by identifying the total number of validated items for which correct responses have been identified by the Candidate. Because there is no additional correction or penalty for wrong answers, Candidates are encouraged to answer all items. The Candidate’s performance on the experimental items does not affect his or her test score in any way.

The validated items are distributed equally across eight (8) substantive item categories. These categories were identified by ABFP after review of forensic texts and specialty forensic practice areas endorsed by Forensic Diplomates in the ABFP Directory. These eight categories are:

- Ethics, Guidelines, and Professional Issues
- Law, Legal Precedents, Court Rules, and Civil and Criminal Procedure
- Testing and Assessment, Judgment and Bias, and Examination Issues
- Individual Rights and Liberties, Civil Competencies, Substitute Judgment
- Juvenile, Parenting, and Family/Matrimonial Matters
- Personal Injury, Civil Damages, Disability, and Workers Compensation
- Criminal Competence
- Criminal Responsibility

Preparation for the written examination may be facilitated by study of the materials referenced in ABFP’s Suggested Reading List for Written and Oral Examinations, which may be found at www.abfp.com.
THE PRACTICE SAMPLES

A. How Practice Samples Fit into the Diplomate Process

Once the candidate has been notified by the American Board of Professional Psychology of successful completion of the written examination, the candidate may proceed to the Oral Examination stage of the process. The first aspect of this stage is to submit two Practice Samples for consideration. After the Practice Samples are accepted, the candidate and the National Chair of Examinations schedule the Oral Examination. These Practice Samples will serve as a partial basis for the Oral Examination. The Oral Examination is the last step in the ABFP Diplomate process.

B. The Practice Samples.

1. Purpose and substance. The practice samples provide a vehicle by which to assess the candidate’s ability to apply psychological knowledge at an advanced level of competence and professionalism in forensic contexts. Two practice samples are required. Each sample should represent a primary area of the candidate’s practice. The choice of practice sample areas will define the areas in which the candidate is further examined as part of the oral examination.

2. Distinct Areas of Practice. Each practice sample should represent one of two distinct and separate areas of forensic psycholegal knowledge and practice. The two areas should differ in legal standards, case law applications, and methodologies.
   a. Some examples of sufficiently distinct practice areas would include:
      i. (sample 1) sanity/mental state at the time of the offense and (sample 2) competence to stand trial; or
      ii. (sample 1) worker’s compensation and (sample 2) guardianship.
   b. An example of forensic activities that are not sufficiently distinct would be:
      i. (sample 1) parenting/child custody examination involving a relocation issue and (sample 2) parenting child custody examination involving allegations of sexual abuse; or
      ii. (sample 1) personal injury examinations and (sample 2) workers compensation examinations.
   c. The Corresponding Secretary of ABFP is available for consultation to help the applicant clarify selection of practice samples.

3. Basis. Practice Samples are based on actual samples or products of forensic practice (e.g., a forensic examination report, a forensic treatment program or
protocol, peer reviewed article for which the author is the primary author) and include, in addition to each practice sample itself:

a. Psychological test data (if applicable)

b. Most relevant third party documentation (if applicable)

c. Relevant state or federal statutory and case law (if applicable)

d. Any published research, ethical principles, or legal citations that might be particularly relevant to the forensic practice sample (optional)

4. **Content.** *Each* of the two practice samples should include and be submitted as follows:

a. *Title Page* with your name, address, telephone number, fax number and e-mail address. The title should reflect the nature of the case.

b. *Table of Contents* (maximum of two pages). This should clearly indicate each subsection.

c. *Curriculum Vitae* which details the candidate’s background, training, and involvement in forensic psychology.

d. *The Forensic Practice Sample* (e.g., a forensic examination report, a forensic treatment program or protocol, a peer reviewed article for which the author is the primary author) in which the identity of each person is protected (maximum of 70 pages double-spaced).

e. *Supplementary Materials*, as appropriate. Remember that neither practice sample can exceed 100 pages in its entirety. Contact the Corresponding Secretary to request a waiver if these page limits prevent you from adequately presenting either of your practice samples within the 100 page limit.

i. Supplementary materials may include:
   1. test data
   2. relevant case and statutory law
   3. relevant research articles or ethical principles.

5. **Technical Aspects.**

a. Except as noted below, all written materials should be submitted on

   i. 8 ½ x 11 inch, 24 pound, pure white paper
   ii. single-sided
   iii. double-spaced
   iv. in 12 point font
   v. with one-inch margins on all sides
   vi. with page numbers on each page
b. Five (5) copies of each sample must be prepared.

c. Material included in the Supplementary Materials section need not be double-spaced, may be two-sided, and may be on copy-weight paper.

d. Published documents may be submitted in their original published format.

e. Published documents and Supplementary Materials should have each page numbered in succession. If published or supplementary material is two-sided, each side is to be numbered. Each practice sample begins with page number 1 and is numbered sequentially thereafter including all supplementary material.

f. Edit the material for grammatical errors, spelling errors and typographical errors. Practice samples may be disqualified because of careless presentation.

i. All pages are to be clear and legible. Any handwritten, original documents (e.g., Rorschach protocols, WAIS-III responses) must be legible. If they are not, type them out.

ii. Bind practice sample #1 and practice sample #2 separately. Loose-leaf binding is not acceptable. Spiral or Comb bindings are preferred.

g. Recency of the practice sample.

i. A clinical case or unpublished research paper upon which a practice sample is based must have been completed no more than two years before the date upon which the applicant’s credentials were accepted.

ii. Published research must have been accepted for publication no more than two years before the date upon which the applicant’s credentials were accepted.

6. Time Frames and Extensions

a. Practice Samples must be received within ONE YEAR of the date that the candidate received notice of passing the written examination.

b. The candidate may request extensions for proper cause, in writing, from the Corresponding Secretary, indicating the circumstances upon which the request is based and plans for completing submission of the practice samples.
c. The Corresponding Secretary may grant an extension subject to the review of the board. HOWEVER, NO MORE THAN TWO EXTENSIONS CAN BE GRANTED FOR A COMBINED TOTAL OF ONE ADDITIONAL YEAR.

d. If this time frame (with extensions) is not met, the application lapses. The candidate may reapply to the American Board of Professional Psychology in writing. Once the application is reopened, the written examination must be retaken and, when passed, the practice samples must again be submitted within one year of the date of successfully completing the written examination. Additional fees are required based upon the fee structure in effect at that time.

7. Authorship

a. The practice samples and the products upon which they are based must be the candidate’s own effort. Supervisory input and the participation of coworkers or assistants must be at a minimum, and must not represent substantive contributions to the candidate’s completed product.

i. For example, others may copy-edit the sample.

ii. However, a practice sample should not be reviewed or critiqued by any other person prior to submission nor prior to the oral examination.

iii. Applicants may request others to review or critique other examples of their forensic work efforts, but then those practice samples may not be used as any part of the practice sample. On the basis of this review, preferably by a Diplomate in Forensic Psychology, the candidate may be informed by this consultant of any limitations in their work before undertaking the major step of submitting their actual practice samples for Oral Examination.

b. Do not submit a practice sample where a preponderance of the psycho-diagnostic tools was administered by another party.

c. If a research project has dual experimenters or a research article has dual authorship, it is incumbent upon the applicant to clarify and document that his or her contribution to the practice sample was substantial and significant.

8. Privacy and Confidentiality

a. The name of each of the persons, institutions, and entities identified in the practice samples (including the Supplementary Material sections) must be
disguised, either by deleting or blacking out names or by assigning fictitious identities to persons, institutions, and other entities. This is required even if the practice sample is part of the public record. Specifically state at the start of each practice sample if a fictitious identity or pseudonym has been used.

b. A PRACTICE SAMPLE WILL BE DISQUALIFIED IF CONFIDENTIALITY, PRIVACY, AND PRIVILEGE ARE NOT ADEQUATELY PROTECTED.

9. Summary

a. Review these Guidelines thoroughly.

b. Consult with the Corresponding Secretary before beginning your practice samples and at anytime during the process.

c. Prepare two (2) practice samples, each having a different forensic and psychological focus.

d. The work effort cannot be more than two years old, dating from the time that your credentials were approved and your application for candidacy accepted.

e. Protect the identity of each party by deleting all names or by providing fictitious identities.

f. Follow all the format criteria in the Guidelines. Each of the two practice samples cannot be more than 100 pages from beginning to end.

g. Make five (5) copies of each of the two practice samples.

h. Bind each practice sample separately.

i. Send one (1) copy of each of the practice samples to the ABFP Executive Director at the address provided below.

j. Retain four (4) additional copies. One (1) retained copy is insurance in case of loss and for your own use at the oral examination. The remaining three (3) copies will be requested by the National Chair of Examinations in due course.

C. Practice Sample Submissions
10. **“Fatal Flaw” Screening.** The practice samples are submitted to the Executive Director, who will coordinate this screening. If “fatal flaws,” are detected, the candidate is contacted and provided with feedback.

   a. Some examples of “fatal flaws” would be:

      i. Failure to conceal the identities of individuals involved in the case;

      ii. Failure of the sample to represent sufficiently distinct practice areas; or

      iii. Blatant ethical lapses.

   b. If “fatal flaws” are detected, the candidate then will be given the option of withdrawing the practice samples and resubmitting them in consideration of the feedback received.

11. **Submission of Samples.** If the screening review does not reveal obvious “fatal flaws,” or if the candidate elects to proceed despite the cautionary feedback provided, the candidate will then be contacted by the National Chair of Examinations who will collaborate with the candidate in obtaining ethical clearance from various state and national psychological boards and associations, before initiating the process of scheduling the Oral Examination (see below).

**A Checklist for the Practice Sample**

This checklist will help you make sure that your practice sample submission is complete and is according to the requirements above. Complete this checklist and submit it to the ABFP Executive Director along with one copy of each of your practice samples. This checklist is required and must accompany your practice samples.

___ I have included a Curriculum Vita or Resume, or an additional supplementary document, which fully describes my forensic background and current forensic psychological practice as reflected in my two practice samples.

___ I have prepared two practice samples in distinctly different psycho-legal areas that reflect two of my primary areas of practice.

___ The two practice samples each meet all of the criteria outlined in these Guidelines including those for recency and authorship.

*For each practice sample separately, I have provided the following ...*

___ A *Front Page* indicating my name, address and telephone number, which is clearly visible on all copies of the practice samples.
__ A *Title Page* for the product, indicating the forensic/psycholegal area of the work.

__ A *Table of Contents* for all sections and subsections,

__ The *Practice Sample* proper, *i.e.*, the actual written report to the referral source or the actual publication, and

__ A *Supplementary Materials* section which contains:

__ All test data, typed if not otherwise dark and easily legible with names replaced and with pages numbered

__ Excerpts from courtroom testimony, where relevant

__ A copy of especially relevant federal or state statutes and/or regulations pertaining to the practice sample

__ Any other material or research supporting the methodology and/or conclusions

__ If this is a research submission, the instructions to subjects, copies of rating scales, *etc.*

__ I am sending one (1) copy of the above materials to the ABFP Executive Director.

__ I am retaining four (4) additional copies—one (1) copy in case of loss and for my own use at the oral examination and three (3) copies that I will send to the National Chair of Examinations when asked to do so.

__ All copies are printed on 8 ½ x 11 inch, white paper, single-sided, typed, double-spaced (with the exception of the *Supplementary Materials*) with 1-inch margins, and bound in a spiral-type binder (not loose-leaf).

__ All copies are clear and legible.

__ Each of the two practice samples is bound separately.

__ Each practice sample is paginated separately. Each practice sample begins with page.

__ Neither of the practice samples exceeds 100 pages. The practice samples together do not exceed 200 pages.

__ The identities of all persons, institutions, and other entities involved in my practice samples have been deleted or disguised.
I understand that a practice sample in which the identities of the participants, institutions, or other entities have not been concealed will automatically fail.

I understand that a copy of a report to the referral source, by itself, does not constitute a practice sample, unless all format, content and style criteria in this “Guideline” have been met.

I have:

__ Paid the required $700 fee to ABPP.

__ Retained my own four copies of each of the two practice samples.

__ Consulted with the Corresponding Secretary regarding any deviation from these guidelines and documented the reasons for these deviations in the text.

__ Mailed one copy of each practice sample to the Executive Director:

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______________________________  _____/_____/_____
Signature of Applicant Date
THE ORAL EXAMINATION

Following is a general outline of procedures and other considerations regarding the Oral Examination in Forensic Psychology. For additional information and more specific details, please contact the ABFP National Chair of Examinations.

Candidates still proceeding under the “old” (typically, pre-2003) Oral Examination format are advised to contact the ABFP National Chair of Examinations as soon as possible, to determine which of these procedures and considerations may be applicable to their particular situations.

A. Initiating the Oral Examination Process

(1) The Executive Director notifies the National Chair of Examinations (NCE) that the Practice Samples comport with both ABFP and ABPP submission requirements.

(2) The NCE contacts the candidate, describes the Oral Examination process, and forwards electronic copies (with instructions) of the:

(a) Request for Psychological Association Ethical Clearance form;

(b) Request for State/Provincial Board Ethical Clearance form; and

(c) Ethical Certification form.

(3) The NCE requests that the candidate supply an updated curriculum vitae with current contact information.

(4) The NCE also provides the candidate with a copy of (or a link to) the ABFP Suggested Reading List for Written and Oral Examinations.

B. Scheduling the Oral Examination

(1) Once the NCE has received properly endorsed copies of the forms described in A.2 supra, the candidate is notified of this fact and is invited to assist in:

(a) determining a time frame for scheduling the Oral Examination;

(b) selecting a geographical region for the location of the Oral Examination;

(c) identifying any current ABFP Diplomates whose participation in the Oral Examination might constitute a conflict of interest.
The NCE impanels a three-member Oral Examination Committee (consisting of a Chair and two Co-Examiners), having weighed various factors including oral examination experience; practice/research experience and specialization; geographical location; and availability. An “Observer” (an ABFP Diplomate in training to participate in future Oral Examinations) may also be invited to attend.

The NCE contacts the candidate to confirm the composition of the Oral Examination Committee, the identity of the Observer (if any), and the proposed date and general location of the Oral Examination, and then relays this confirmation to the members of the Oral Examination Committee.

Prior to the scheduled Oral Examination, the Chair of the Oral Examination Committee contacts the Candidate to confirm such details as specific locations, starting times, and directions.

C. Conducting the Oral Examination

The examination is conducted by a committee of board certified examiners from the applicant’s specialty board. Candidates should expect to be examined in their areas of practice as determined by each Specialty Board. The Examination Committee will not include any person who had substantial personal or professional contact with the candidate. ABPP Examinations are designed to judge competence at the specialist level in the candidate’s professional practice.

The Oral Examination is designed to determine the candidate’s quality of practice and forensic competencies in areas exemplified by the Practice Samples, as well as to determine the Candidate’s understanding and application of ethical standards – specifically, the *Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct* and the *Specialty Guidelines for Forensic Psychologists*.

The standard contemplated by members of the Oral Examination Committee is described in the *ABFP Brochure*: specifically, that “receipt of the Diploma in Forensic Psychology from the American Board of Professional Psychology (ABPP) attests to the fact that an established organization of peers has examined and accepted the Diplomate as functioning at the highest level of excellence in his or her field of forensic competence.”

The Oral Examination, which is recorded on audio tape, lasts approximately 2½ to 3 hours, with the first half generally devoted to questions concerning the first Practice Sample, and the second half generally devoted to questions the second Practice Sample.
(4) Except for ethical standards as described in C.5 infra, a candidate is only responsible for practice and knowledge reasonably related to areas exemplified by the two Practice Samples. For example, a candidate submitting Practice Samples concerning “competency to stand trial” and “criminal responsibility” would not expect to be examined on “child custody.”

(5) An exception to this primarily Practice Sample-focused approach concerns the candidate’s understanding and application of ethical standards. During both halves of the Oral Examination, it is permissible for inquiries based in the Practice Samples to evolve into discussion of other aspects of the Ethical Principles and/or Specialty Guidelines. The intent here is not, of course, to play “gotcha” with the candidate beyond stated areas of expertise, but rather to ensure that exploration of this core aspect of professionalism is not hampered by an artificially narrow view of the roles and obligations of the forensic psychologist.

(6) At the end of the Oral Examination, the candidate is thanked for participating, and is reminded not to contact any member of the Oral Examination Committee prior to receiving formal notification from ABPP and ABFP of the outcome of the Oral Examination.

D. Reporting the Results of the Oral Examination

(1) Immediately following the departure of the candidate, the Oral Examination Committee deliberates and arrives at a recommendation concerning the outcome of the Oral Examination, which is then communicated to ABFP.

(2) Based upon its review of the Oral Examination Committee’s recommendation, ABFP determines whether the candidate has passed or failed the Oral Examination. The results of this determination are immediately sent by Fax to the Central Office. This decision is typically communicated to the candidate by ABPP and ABFP within 4 to 6 weeks of the Oral Examination.

(3) Any inquiries from the candidate, either before or after the communication of ABFP’s decision, should be directed only to the President of ABFP.

(4) Candidates who pass the Oral Examination become Board Certified Specialists of the American Board of Forensic Psychology and the American Board of Professional Psychology, and Fellows of the American Academy of Forensic Psychology.
(5) Candidates who fail the Oral Examination for the first time may resume the certification process by submitting two new Practice Samples within one year of the communication of ABFP’s decision, and do not need to retake the Written Examination before doing so.

(6) Candidates who fail the Oral Examination a second time may also resume the certification process, but must retake and pass the Written Examination before submitting new Practice Samples.

(7) Candidates wishing to appeal a decision of ABFP must contact its President within 30 days of the communication of that decision.

E. Notification and Award of the Diploma

Applicants who successfully present their practice samples are recommended by the National Chair of Examinations to the ABFP Board of Directors and the ABPP Board of Trustees for award of the forensic diploma. Applicants who do not successfully present at their oral examinations will be given information regarding re-examination and regarding appeal of the Board’s decision.

Each applicant will receive formal notification of the Board’s judgment. Diplomas will be conferred on candidates and sent to the new Diplomate by mail within several weeks from notification of the education results. An explanation of reasons for failure will be supplied to each unsuccessful candidate in order to guide further professional development.