Instructions for Predoctoral Experiences

In 2011, the requirements for licensure as a psychologist were changed. Although two years of supervised training are still required for licensure, these can now be a combination of (1) a predoctoral internship (up to one year of the total), (2) high quality, well-supervised experience acquired while obtaining the doctoral degree (predoctoral experience; up to one year) and (3) postdoctoral supervised experience (the remainder of the two year requirement). The change in 2011 was the addition of Item 1, allowing certain, high-quality predoctoral experience to count. This allows applicants to obtain licensure sooner after the doctorate is awarded. The Board of Psychologist Examiners (BoPE) regulations regarding the supervised experience requirement for licensure (16.22.6 New Mexico Administrative Code) are available online through a link at our website.

General Note to Applicants and Supervisors:

The intent of this change is to recognize the high quality of training experiences received by many students during their graduate careers and to shorten the time to licensure by counting such experiences. We hope that applicants, their supervisors and Directors of Clinical Training will recognize this change as a benefit and will stay within the spirit of the statute, regulation and guidelines. In particular, we ask that hours not be considered or offered to meet this requirement if they do not fully and obviously meet the criteria listed below. The default option is obtaining all of one’s supervised experience toward licensure through internship and postdoctorally. This was New Mexico’s previous rule and is still a requirement in the majority of states; it is not onerous requirement. Please help us keep the changed requirement as a benefit and a reward for good training rather than a tally to be pushed to its limit.

Forms to Document Predoctoral Supervised Experience

As noted in more detail below, the Association of State and Provincial Psychology Boards (ASPPB) has drafted guidelines for what kind of predoctoral practicum hours should count for licensure if a state decides to do so. Following the clear directions of the licensing law, we have conformed our regulations to fit ASPPB guidelines (printed below).

By good fortune, ASPPB is in the process of implementing a national system for registering all requirements for licensure online. New Mexico is participating in the initial stages of this project, but it is not yet available online. While awaiting full implementation, New Mexico is using the forms developed by ASPPB to document the applicant’s high-quality predoctoral hours.

There are two forms to be submitted to the Board of Psychologist Examiners:

“Practicum Documentation Form” is signed and verified by the supervisor for each high quality practicum site being offered by the applicant to meet the experience requirement. On
this form, the supervisor documents the characteristics of the site, the supervision provided and the number of hours of clinical work and supervision.

Please submit forms only for practicum experience that meets the requirements set by our regulations. We recognize that other experiences are valuable, but we will only accept hours that meet our regulations.

“Program Practicum Verification Form” is the verification by your doctoral program’s Director of Clinical Training (or equivalent position) that each of your practicum sites meets the criteria set out in our regulations. Your DCT will fill out a section for each of the sites that you have documented on the Practicum Documentation Form, checking off that it meets the criteria set forth by BoPE regulations. This document serves as a kind of cover letter and menu stating that the practica are appropriately supervised and approved by the department.

In reviewing the ASPPB forms, we find them clear, but we view them from a different perspective and set of experiences.

We conclude this document with an addendum that explains in more detail (from the BoPE regulations) the requirements for predoctoral supervised experiences.

**Addendum:**
Requirements for Predoctoral Experiences to Count for Licensure.

The leadership of professional psychology in the state (Board of Examiners and New Mexico Psychological Association) wanted to allow the addition of predoctoral experience only if the hours obtained were of high quality, integrated into the applicants course of study and well supervised. The Association of State and Provincial Psychology Boards (ASPPB) had already promulgated guidelines for such clinical experience, and the New Mexico legislation states that predoctoral practicum hours must be “overseen by a graduate training program and consistent with the guidelines on practicum experience for licensure promulgated by the association of state and provincial psychology boards” (New Mexico Statutes Annotated 61-9-11-A5(a))

The Board’s regulations, which were written to incorporate the ASPPB guidelines) are:

**16.22.6.8 PREDOCTORAL/POSTDOCTORAL SUPERVISED EXPERIENCE**

A. Supervised experience leading toward licensure:

   (1) two (2) years (3,000 hours) of supervised experience are required for licensure;
   
   (a) up to one year (1500 hours) of the supervised experience may be obtained in predoctoral practicum hours overseen by the doctoral training program and consistent with the guidelines on practicum experience for licensure promulgated by the association of state and provincial psychology board; and
   
   (b) up to one year (1500 hours) of the supervised experience may be obtained in a predoctoral internship approved by the American psychological association; or
(c) up to one-half year (750 hours) of the supervised experience may be obtained in a predoctoral internship not approved by the American psychological association; and

(d) after totaling approved predoctoral practicum hours and allowed hours for predoctoral internship, the remainder of the (3000 hours) supervised experience must be obtained in supervised postdoctoral psychological work.

(2) predoctoral and postdoctoral experience from all supervisors shall be documented on forms provided by the board.

B. Predoctoral practicum experience. Predoctoral practicum training is an organized, sequential series of supervised experiences of increasing complexity, serving to prepare the student for internship and partially meeting the requirements for licensure. Training experiences shall follow appropriate academic preparation and shall be overseen by the doctoral training program. Not all supervised experience accumulated during graduate training may count toward licensure. The board requires that all predoctoral practicum experiences counting toward licensure be of high quality and carefully approved and monitored by the doctoral training program. In particular, these experiences should advance the doctoral student’s role and identity as a psychologist. All experiences counting toward licensure must be supervised one hour per week by a licensed psychologist or clinical faculty member who is allowed to practice psychology under the laws of the state. The director of clinical training of the doctoral training program, or designee of that program’s chair, shall certify, in a form satisfactory to the board, that the hours meet the following specifications of type of clinical activity and supervision:

(1) The practicum setting was approved by, integrated with and monitored by the doctoral training program;

(2) The hours were obtained in the course of an organized, sequential series of supervised experiences of increasing complexity, serving to prepare the student for internship and partially meeting the requirements for licensure.

(3) Supervised practicum experience occurred in psychological service settings that had, as part of the organizational mission, a goal of training professional psychologists.

(4) Each practicum setting had an identified, licensed psychologist who was responsible for maintaining the integrity and quality of the experience for each trainee. The doctoral training program shall assign a licensed psychologist to serve in this role if none is available on site.

(5) All supervisors were qualified by education, licensure and experience to provide supervision of doctoral students.

(6) Where experiences counted for licensure were obtained in various settings, each setting was an appropriate experience in itself, the particular student was academically prepared for that experience and the combination of experiences was appropriate to the student’s training needs.

(7) The following clinical experiences and supervision were present across settings:

(a) At least 50% of the total hours of supervised experience were in service-related activities, defined as treatment/intervention, assessment, interviews, report-writing, case presentations, and consultations.
(b) At least 25% of the total hours were face-to-face patient/client contact.

(c) Supervision by a licensed psychologist or clinical faculty member who is allowed to practice psychology under the laws of the state was at least one hour for each day (eight (8) hours including the supervision; 12 ½ % of total) of supervised experience for experienced students. The doctoral training program shall assure that higher levels of supervision are provided for less experienced students. All supervision time, whether individual or group, including additional supervision beyond that may be counted as part of the total supervised experience.

(8) The board requires that all predoctoral practicum experiences counting toward licensure be of high quality and carefully approved and monitored by the doctoral training program. In particular, these experiences should advance the doctoral student’s role and identity as a psychologist. All experiences counting toward licensure must be supervised one hour per week by a licensed psychologist or clinical faculty member who is allowed to practice psychology under the laws of the state.

(9) The board may, at its discretion, require documentation that above system of training was in place for the applicant. Possible forms of documentation include but are not limited to:

(a) individual written training plans between the doctoral training program and each practicum training site;

(b) policies and procedures of the doctoral training program designating the expectations for practicum training sequences;

(c) program descriptions or self-study documents submitted for program approval to the American Psychological Association or the American Association of State and Provincial Psychology Boards.