



Nova Scotia Board of Examiners in Psychology

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Requirements and Criteria for Assessing Regular Applicants

For greater clarity, this document is intended for applicants who have obtained their academic credentials from an institution in Canada or the US, and who:

- do not possess any current registration with a psychology regulatory body
- possess registration with a psychology regulatory body that constitutes a provisional type of registration
- possess registration as a psychologist but in a category that does not represent full registration, e.g. retired registration, non-practising registration, etc.
- possess registration in another jurisdiction but it is not with a psychology regulatory body, e.g., counselling, marriage and family therapy, etc.

Academic Requirement

As per the Psychologists Act (2000), applicants for registration as psychologists are required to show they have obtained a master's, doctoral or equivalent degree in psychology that is acceptable to the Board from an educational institution approved the Board. As noted, the above criteria are required by legislation. The Board does not have discretion to waive these requirements. Furthermore, augmenting an insufficient degree by completing coursework or supervision after one has completed his/her academic degree does not convert an unacceptable degree to one that is acceptable to the Board. This is because the post degree coursework and training was not part of the formal graduate degree.

The Board has adopted the Position of the Association of Canadian Psychology Regulatory Organizations (ACPRO) that the National Standard for registration as a Psychologist is graduation from a doctoral program in Psychology accredited by the Canadian Psychological Association (CPA). Consequently, a doctoral program in Psychology accredited by the Canadian Psychological Association (CPA) automatically constitutes a degree in psychology that is acceptable to the Board from an educational institution approved the Board. The full document containing the National Standard is available from the following URL:

<http://www.nsbep.org/downloads/ACPRONationalStandard.pdf>

(1) In the absence of graduation from a CPA accredited doctoral program in psychology, the degree in psychology obtained by the applicant will be reviewed by the Board to determine whether it must meet the following criteria:

i) The program must be an integrated, organized sequence of study, standing as a recognizable, coherent organizational entity within the institution. Wherever it may be administratively housed, the institution's officers must identify it as a psychology program, and the majority of its faculty as psychologists. For greater clarity, the Board requires the core faculty and majority of program faculty to be comprised of psychologists.

ii) The program must have required an undergraduate degree in psychology (or equivalent courses in psychology) as part of the entrance requirement. To clarify, this criterion does not simply require the applicant to possess an undergraduate degree in psychology but an undergraduate degree in psychology (or equivalent courses in psychology) must be an admittance requirement of the program.

iii) The faculty of the program must have clear authority and primary responsibility for the core and specialty areas whether or not the program cuts across administrative lines.

iv) The program should have a body of resident students who are enrolled in that program. Programs that are primarily based on-line are not acceptable to the Board. For further clarification, the Board has adopted the Section on Residency from the Model Licensing Act recently approved by the Association of State and Provincial Psychology Boards. It states:

“Residency means physical presence, in person, at an educational institution or training facility in a manner that facilitates acculturation in the profession, the full participation and integration of the individual in the educational, and training experience and includes faculty student interaction. Training models that rely exclusively on physical presence for periods of less than one continuous year (e.g. multiple long weekends and/or summer intensive sessions), or that use video conferencing or other electronic means as a substitute for any part of the minimum requirement for physical presence at the institution do not meet this definition of residency.”

Note: The minimum period of one continuous year of residency is in addition to any practica or internship completed as part of the program requirements.

v) Curriculum requirements of the program must include adequate theoretical content in psychology and supervised practicum, internship, field or laboratory training appropriate to psychology. In order to meet these requirements, the master's level degree must be at least two years in duration.

Applicants are assessed with respect to competency in [five core competency areas](#): Assessment and Evaluation; Intervention; Research; Ethics and Standards; and Interpersonal Relationships. Course work and experience in these areas must be listed. Below is a link to the Core Competencies in Psychology:

http://nsbep.org/downloads/Core_Competencies.pdf

The program must include practica and/or internship directly supervised by psychologists. While members of other allied regulated professions may serve as secondary supervisors, the primary supervisor(s) must be a psychologist.

The practica must be an organized and integrated component of the graduate training program in psychology. Supervision outside of one's program does not count.

The practica must be a minimum of 500 hours.

Coursework titles/descriptions must use clear psychological terminology/abbreviations such as the words "psychology", "psychological" "psych."

vi) In addition to the foregoing, the applicant must demonstrate sufficient [foundational knowledge](#) in four general areas: Knowledge of the biological bases of behaviour; Knowledge of the cognitive-affective bases of behaviour; Knowledge of the social bases of behaviour; and Knowledge of the psychology of the individual. This must be demonstrated with at least one full course or two half courses, in each of the four areas. Introductory level courses are not acceptable for meeting this requirement. Some more information about the Foundational Knowledge areas is below: http://nsbep.org/downloads/Foundational_Knowledge.pdf

(2) The Board will consider whether the educational institution has recognized standing or accreditation.

(3) Degrees in education, counseling, guidance, family studies, mental health studies, child studies, rehabilitation and other such designations, are not normally considered degrees in psychology.

The M.A. (School Psychology) program at Mount Saint Vincent University meets the requirements noted above; the Education Psychology (M.Ed) does not. At Acadia University, the counseling M.Ed is not accepted, but the clinical psychology (M.Sc.) is an acceptable program for registration as a Psychologist. The M.Ed. programs at either of these universities may lead to qualifications as a guidance counselor, school counselor or counselor, but they do not lead to psychology registration or prepare you to take the prerequisite examination for Professional Practice in Psychology.

For a list of acceptable programs from within Atlantic Canada, those accredited by the Canadian Psychological Association, and more information concerning acceptable programs, please [click here](#).

At times the Board is contacted by individuals who possess a degree in a related field (e.g., counselling); however their degree is not specifically in psychology and/or does not meet the Board's requirements for acceptable degrees in psychology. If applicable, you might consider checking with the [Nova Scotia College of Counselling Therapists](#) for registration eligibility. The College of Counselling Therapists is the provincial governing body for counselling therapy.

NSBEP does not evaluate individual programs until an application for registration is completed.

Psychological work experience

The Board's academic requirements include completion of a **minimum** period of supervised work in the form of a practicum or internship as part of the academic training program.

However, applicants must have psychological work experience in the particular area(s) for which they are declaring. This experience requirement not only includes the broad area of practice declared by the applicant, but it would apply to the populations or activities declared by the applicant. If the declared practice area(s) and/or population(s) are not consistent the applicant's experience and training, the Board may decline to approve the area of practice or population that is not supported by the application. The Board has the ability to [restrict the practice](#) of a psychologist where appropriate.

Some applicants have been under the impression that during the application they should declare activities and populations for which they are unfamiliar with because they might like to pursue such work in future. Here are some examples (that should not be considered exhaustive). It would be inappropriate to declare children as a population to be served if one has not had such experience as part of their practicum or internship. Similarly it would be incongruous to offer couples counselling or psychoeducational assessments without first having such experience.

The intention of the Declaration of Psychological Practice, which is part of the Online Application for Registration, is to realistically consider what one would be carrying out in their candidacy, in the immediate future.

It is understood that one's employment may change over time. Following placement on the Register of Candidates, it is possible to submit a Learning Plan to appropriately expand one's populations or activities in a manner achievable during the period of candidacy. However, such a process should be considered after one has begun meeting with his/her supervisor and had the opportunity to review their current workload and discuss a potential learning plan with their Board Supervisor. More information about developing a Learning Plan can be found in the NSBEP Supervision Handbook, available via the following URL:

<http://www.nsbep.org/downloads/SupervisionHandbook.pdf>

Language Proficiency

The Psychologists Act requires one to speak and write either English or French with reasonable fluency. As such, one must be reasonably fluent in the English or French Language, depending on the language spoken by the intended population to be served. This requirement is informally considered throughout the Board's review of the Application. As well, if one's first language is not English or French, he/she may be required to make arrangements to complete a language proficiency exam, depending on the population to be served.

Evidence of good character

[This requirement](#) is assessed throughout the Application, and specifically via background checks (criminal and child abuse), a background questionnaire, references, and information about any registration history in other jurisdictions.

Demonstrate an understanding of professional practice and ethical issues, and have an understanding of local practices and conditions

This requirement is initially assessed throughout the completed application, particularly under the Core Competency section for Ethics and Standards.

Prior to registration with the Nova Scotia Board of Examiners in Psychology, applicants are required to attest that they have reviewed the relevant local jurisprudence, standards, and resources. For information purposes, a document on the Attestation Process is accessible directly below.

http://www.nsbep.org/downloads/Information_Attestation.pdf

Such a requirement is also an aspect of the process after an individual's name is added to the Register of Candidates, after beginning the legislated period of Candidate Register supervision and examinations.

To be clear, supervision must be completed while one is registered as a Psychologist (Candidate Register) and working in Nova Scotia. For more information on the examinations and candidacy requirements, please visit the FAQ page for Candidate Registrants, available via the following URL:

<http://www.nsbep.org/information-for-registrants/for-candidate-registrants/faq/>