

	<p style="text-align: center;">TEXAS STATE BOARD OF EXAMINERS OF PSYCHOLOGISTS</p> <p style="text-align: center;">333 Guadalupe, Suite 2-450 Austin, Texas 78701 Tel.: (512) 305-7700 Fax: (512) 305-7701</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>For Agency Use Only</u></p>
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Oral Examination Information

I. Purpose of the Oral Examination

The **Texas State Board of Examiners of Psychologists (TSBEP)** is charged by law with the responsibility of examining candidates for licensure. Licensure is designed to serve the public by ensuring that those licensed possess the fundamental knowledge, skills and professionalism to practice at the entry level. As the final step prior to earning the privilege of independent practice, the Oral Examination is an integral part of the licensure process, allowing the Board to evaluate a candidate's skills directly.

The purpose of the exam is to evaluate the candidate's ability to apply what they know to a vignette that is representative of situations that are encountered in independent practice. The exam focuses on the candidate's ability to conceptualize the case in a meaningful way, to explore differential diagnosis issues, and to formulate an appropriate treatment plan. Additional questions address ethics, laws, Board rules, supervision issues, and other relevant areas.

In order to sit for the Oral Exam, a candidate must be provisionally licensed as a psychologist by the TSBEP. Passage of the Oral Exam protects the public by ensuring that the candidate has the knowledge and skills necessary for entry-level practice in the state of Texas.

Some individuals may be exempt from the Oral Examination requirement. A list of grounds for waiver from the Oral Examination may be found in Board rule 463.15. You are encouraged to study this rule carefully to determine whether you are eligible for a waiver. If eligible, you may download a *Request for Waiver of the Oral Examination* form from TSBEP's website, and submit the completed form and supporting documentation to TSBEP in lieu of a request to sit for the exam.

II. Examination Procedures

A. Application

1. The Oral Exam is administered at regularly scheduled intervals. The exams are held on the first or second Friday-Saturday weekends in

- January and July. Specific examination dates and application deadlines can be found on the TSBEP website.
2. Candidates must download the *Application to Sit for the Oral Examination* from TSBEP's website.
 3. Candidates must return the completed application form to the TSBEP office, along with the required fee, before the application deadline.
 4. Candidates must have passed the EPPP and the Jurisprudence exam in order to be eligible to take the Oral Examination, but do not have to wait until their post-doctoral supervisory year is completed.
 5. When applying to take this exam, candidates are asked to choose from one of the following examination areas: clinical, counseling, school, neuropsychological, child clinical, and industrial/organizational. Candidates should choose the area in which they are most comfortable being examined. Sitting for the Oral Examination in any given area will not operate to restrict the candidate's future area(s) of practice.
 6. The TSBEP will notify each candidate of the date, time, and location of the Oral Exam. Examination times are not negotiable, and exam fees are not refundable.

B. Examination Day

1. The candidate should report to the Oral Exam site on the date and time stated on the notification. If the candidate has an emergency that prevents attendance, the candidate is responsible for notifying the Board. If you are unfamiliar with the examination site, plan to arrive early, as exams will start and end on time. Be sure to bring photo identification.
2. The candidate will be examined by two senior psychologists with expertise in the examination area selected by the candidate. The vignette assigned for the examination will also be drawn from this examination area.
3. One hour is allotted for the examination.
4. The examiners will record the examination on equipment provided by TSBEP. No other recording will be permitted.
5. Note pads and pencils will be made available to the candidate for use in the exam room only. Notes may not be taken out of the exam room, except by one of the examiners.
6. Other than a handbag or small backpack, no other materials may be brought into the examination room. Candidates are urged not to bring any electronic equipment into the exam room (e.g. phones, laptops, pagers, PDAs, etc.)
7. At the end of the examination, candidates will be asked to wait on site until dismissed by the Board staff.

8. Following the examination, each examiner will independently record the candidate's scores on the Candidate Score Sheet and will determine whether the candidate has achieved a passing score.
 - a. If both examiners agree (either both pass or both fail the candidate), the candidate will be dismissed by the TSBEP staff.
 - b. If the examiners disagree (one pass, one fail), the candidate will be given the opportunity for a re-examination on that same day. Split decisions occurring on a Friday evening may be rescheduled for the next day however, depending upon time and the availability of examiners. Re-examinations will involve two new examiners and a new vignette.
 - c. Candidates who do not receive passing scores from both examiners on the second examination will be considered to have failed the exam.
9. Candidates will be given a sealed envelope with their examination results as they leave the building. Candidates will not be permitted to re-enter the building once they have received their exam results, nor will they be permitted to speak with their examiners, Board members, or Board staff.
 - a. Candidates who pass will simply be told they have passed.
 - b. Candidates who fail will receive feedback instructing them about the broad areas where they scored poorly (see Scoring, below).
10. Candidates who fail the Oral Exam may reapply to take the examination with payment of the appropriate fee.
11. A candidate may appeal a failing score if there has been a procedural error.
 - a. Procedural matters are to be reviewed by the TSBEP Oral Exam Committee.
 - b. The Oral Exam Committee may not take corrective action if there is no evidence of a procedural error.
 - c. If the Oral Exam Committee determines that a procedural error has occurred, the candidate will be allowed to re-examine at no charge during the next regularly scheduled Oral Examination. The Oral Examination Committee cannot change the candidate's score for the appealed examination.

C. Selection of Examiners

The Examiner Pool is composed of senior psychologists who are nominated by their peers. Potential examiners who have been licensed at least 3 years, who have appropriate academic background and professional experience, and who are in good standing in the profession are appointed to the Examiner Pool by the Board's Oral Examination Committee. Examiners are instructed to withdraw from the Oral Examination of a particular candidate if for any reason (prior

relationship, bias, institutional loyalty, etc.) they are unable to serve as objective and unbiased evaluators.

D. Vignettes

The vignettes used in the Oral Examination have been developed by teams of senior psychologists in each area of specialization. Effort has been made to select case examples that are representative of situations commonly encountered in the usual course of professional practice. The vignettes are not theory bound and candidates are not required to adopt any particular theoretical orientation (but they should be able to articulate a case formulation according to some standard or model that is generally recognized in their area).

Candidates will be given a few minutes to read the vignette and make notes if they choose. They will then be asked to read the vignette aloud for the audio recording. The examiners will then ask a series of questions about the case. These questions comprise the structured interview format and are closely scripted. However, examiners are free to ask follow-up questions in order to determine whether the candidate has formulated a satisfactory answer. Examiners receive training in the process. They understand that the Oral Exam is designed to determine whether a candidate has basic entry-level abilities and knowledge. Thus, follow-up questions should help candidates show what they know, not trip them up with arcane details.

E. Scoring

1. For each vignette, examiners are provided questions that elicit the candidate's abilities in the following 9 content areas:
 - a. Identifies Problem (e.g. initial hypotheses, differential diagnoses)
This may include reaching an accurate and appropriately substantiated evaluation of the problem in an efficient manner, including DSM differential diagnosis and setting forth the problem in a viable manner with respect to a relevant theoretical framework and initial hypothesis and formulation.
 - b. Identifies and Obtains Information/Psychometrics (e.g. psychometrics, observational data collection). This may include demonstration of working knowledge and skills of psychometric tests and/or other measurement principles and techniques; making a clear differential diagnosis based on information obtained; use of appropriate measurement or assessment strategies (models, techniques, instruments) to test identified hypotheses and problems; and identifying required information for accurate diagnosis and treatment planning.
 - c. Develops and Proposes the Implementation of a Plan of Action and/or Intervention. This area of inquiry may include questions to allow the candidate to demonstrate utilization of adequate

knowledge of appropriate intervention procedures and to propose an appropriate plan of action for intervention. This may include elaboration such as describing a plan that encompasses and is compatible with available information; taking into account appropriate and relevant resources (e.g. medical, work environment, community, school, family, etc.); displaying knowledge of viable intervention procedures; sorting the problem into treatable components; demonstrating follow-up procedures appropriate to the plan of action; demonstrating the knowledge and importance of communication skills necessary to implement the plan of action.

- d. Handles Crisis Situation. Questions in this area allow the candidate to show awareness of most factors involved in a crisis situation and to demonstrate the knowledge and use of referral networks. The ability to assess crisis situations quickly, to plan viable intervention procedures, and to propose procedures to prevent subsequent crises may also be assessed.
- e. Attends to Cultural and Other Relevant Differences. Questions in this area allow the candidate to demonstrate understanding of the role that social class, culture, ethnicity, gender, age, sexual orientation, etc. have on human growth and development; to demonstrate knowledge of circumstances warranting referral; and to distinguish relevant factors that may exist among cultures or that may be person specific. Ideally, the candidate will demonstrate awareness of their own limitations and expertise including their own values and biases; knowledge of specific areas of consultation needed and how to obtain them; knowledge of circumstances that may warrant referral; understanding of cultural, social, political, advocacy, and other factors; and knowledge that enables effective work with individuals whose demographics are different from the candidate's.
- f. Demonstrates Awareness of Professional Limitations. Questions in this area allow the candidate to demonstrate general awareness of areas of limited knowledge and skills; areas of need for continuing improvement of knowledge and skills; and the importance of upgrading professional abilities. Ideally, the candidate will be able to demonstrate knowledge of effective functioning within their education and experiential limitations; knowledge of limits of practice; and knowledge of when to refer or seek consultation.
- g. Application of Professional Standards. This may include demonstration of knowledge of the standards, guidelines, and rules related to supervision and practice; judgments consistent with published standards; and the ability to integrate published standards and ethical guidelines as related to the case vignette or the general application of these standards. Ideally, the candidate

will demonstrate a keen awareness of the APA Standards for Providers of Psychological Services; an awareness of the Specialty Guidelines for Delivery of Services in his/her chosen area; the ability to apply appropriate supervisory standards; and the ability to discuss and refer to specific and relevant standards, guidelines, and supervisory rules, as reference sources in responding to questions during the examination.

- h. Application of Laws. In response to questions in this area, candidates should demonstrate suitable application of Texas laws and Board rules involving licensing and the professional practice of psychology. Ideally, the candidate will demonstrate exact knowledge of Texas laws and Board rules relating to the profession of psychology; evaluate legal issues related to the practice of psychology; and display accurate sensitivity to issues involving confidentiality.
- i. Application of Ethics. Throughout the examination and in response to specific questions the candidate should demonstrate the ability to apply ethical standards; an understanding of information regarding professional ethics; and knowledge about how to resolve ethical issues. Ideally, this will include a high degree of knowledge about ethical standards; the application of ethical standards; and an awareness of viable options when facing an ethical dilemma.

- 2. Each of these nine content areas will be scored in the following manner:
 - a. Pass-plus +9 points, for an unusually well articulated answer.
 - b. Pass +8 points, for a good, passing answer.
 - c. Marginal +3 points, for a weak, vague, or incomplete answer.
 - d. Unacceptable -10 points, for an answer that is substantially incomplete or incorrect.
- 3. A candidate must receive a score of 64 points to pass the Oral Exam. An unacceptable (-10) score will automatically result in failure of the exam.
- 4. If a candidate receives a failing score, the examiners will indicate the areas failed on a feedback sheet. This information will be provided to the candidate along with his/her exam results. In the case of a split decision on the part of the examiners, the candidate will be provided a feedback form indicating the failed areas prior to their next exam.
- 5. Examiners have the option of providing limited written feedback to a candidate following his/her examination. This feedback is limited to issues where the candidate's response indicated a mistake, misunderstanding, or misapplication of standard principles or law, but did not rise to the level of failing in that particular content area.