

The National School Psychology Certification System (NSPCS)

PROCEDURES MANUAL

Updated June 2020

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STRUCTURE AND PROCEDURES

Purpose

The National School Psychology Certification System (NSPCS) was created by the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) for the purpose of recognizing school psychologists who meet criteria developed by NASP (*Standards for the Credentialing of School Psychologists*). Eligibility to apply to the NSPCS is open to NASP members and nonmembers alike.

Credential

The title to be used by persons accepted into the National School Psychology Certification System will be “Nationally Certified School Psychologist” or “NCSP” (NASP Policy adopted by the Delegate Assembly April 1988). Individuals who uses this designation or represents themselves as Nationally Certified School Psychologist without having fulfilled the requirements of this credentialing process and received official recognition of meeting said requirements are deemed to be in violation of the NASP *Principles for Professional Ethics*.

Goals

The NSPCS was developed to create a nationally recognized standard for credentialing school psychologists (NASP Policy adopted by the Delegate Assembly April 1988; See Appendix A for the history of the system). A wide range of credentialing requirements exists across states, creating a need to recognize school psychologists who meet national standards.

Specific goals of the system are to:

- ensure that the holders of the NCSP demonstrate a commitment to the highest standards of professionalism, ethics, and practice;
- promote national standards for credentialing across states and agencies;
- ensure a consistent level of graduate preparation and field experience among those holding the NCSP credential;
- ensure that school psychologists receive continuing professional development (CPD);
- facilitate credentialing of school psychologists across states;
- promote the use of the NASP 2020 Professional Standards by graduate preparation programs;
- monitor the implementation of NASP credentialing standards at the national level; and
- encourage school psychologists to demonstrate their commitment to professional excellence.

Structure

The administration of the National School Psychology Certification System is to be vested under the authority of the National School Psychology Certification Board (NSPCB; otherwise known as NCSP Board).

Board

The NSPCB is composed of a chair and six to eight members-at-large, including a Strategic Liaison and, to the greatest extent possible, a member of the Credentialing Committee (or designee). The NASP President is an ex officio member of the NCSP Board. To the greatest extent possible, the Board should include a balanced representation of geographic regions, gender, racial and ethnic diversity, and roles (i.e., practitioners, trainers, and supervisors of school psychological services).

The NSPCB Chair serves a 3-year term, renewable once. The Chair is required to have experience both as a distinguished reviewer and as a member of the NSPCB. Appointments to the Chair position are made by the NASP President or President-Elect with input from the NSPCB and NASP Strategic Liaisons with final approval by the NASP Board of Directors.

Nominations for the at-large members of the NSPCB will be solicited from the list of active, experienced NCSP reviewers; recommendations for appointment will be made by the current NSPCB Chair to the NCSPB for approval. Members will serve staggered 3-year terms. All NSPCB members must be current NASP members and must hold the NCSP. NSPCB members may serve only two consecutive 3-year terms. Reappointment to the NSPCB may occur only after at least 1 year of non-Board activities.

Reviewers

NCSP application reviewers include school psychology practitioners, graduate educators, and supervisors of school psychological services selected on the basis of professional experience; leadership or leadership potential; ability to represent the needs of the profession; and potential ability and willingness to provide comprehensive, valid, and timely reviews. Reviewers must also be NASP members and hold the NCSP. An open invitation is sent out through the *Communiqué* or other modes of communication (e.g., email, NASP Communities), and potential reviewers who respond to the invitation, meet the certification requirements, and attend the training session (in person or online) are welcomed as reviewers. They must complete the initial training in the interpretation and application of standards and periodic training updates. They are initially assigned to review with teams consisting of at least two experienced reviewers who can provide guidance and mentoring. After achieving levels of competency reflected in high-quality review reports submitted to the NSPCB, reviewers are eligible to serve on two-person teams. They are also eligible to serve as NSPCB members.

Foundations for the NCSP

All applicants and holders of the NCSP must meet the standards set forth in the *NASP Standards for the Credentialing of School Psychologists* in effect at the time of the receipt of the completed application by the NASP office.

Revision Process:

- At any time that NASP revises the Standards for Graduate Preparation of School Psychologists and Standards for the Credentialing of School Psychologists, the NCSP Board will develop and implement any changes pertinent to the NCSP credential. These revisions to the NCSP process will follow a timeline that generally allows for 2 to 3 years beyond the full implementation of the Standards for Graduate Preparation of School Psychologists.
- It will be the NCSP Board’s responsibility to revise its Procedures Manual to correspond to any impending changes in NASP policy.

Application forms reflect the current standards and require applicants to provide documentation of compliance with the standards.

Graduates of NASP approved or accredited programs meet these standards by virtue of completion of a NASP approved or accredited program, as verified by an official institutional transcript, and by providing documentation of an appropriate internship and a passing score on the Praxis School Psychology exam. Graduate preparation programs that are NASP approved or accredited undergo a rigorous peer-review process conducted by the NASP Program Accreditation Board to document that they meet NASP’s *Standards for Graduate Preparation in School Psychology*. Therefore, individual applicants may use the streamlined process for graduates from NASP-approved or accredited programs. In order to ensure that applicants from non-NASP-approved or accredited programs meet the same high standards, they are required to submit a portfolio and a case study demonstrating the acquisition of knowledge and skills required by the standards.

Certification Requirements

The Nationally Certified School Psychologist (NCSP) credential is granted to persons who have successfully met national standards by:

- A. Graduating from a NASP-approved or accredited program, which includes all of the following,
OR
- B. Completing a sixth-year/specialist level program or higher in school psychology, with a 60 graduate semester hour minimum or equivalent, consisting of coursework, practica, internship, and an appropriate graduate degree from an organized program of study that is officially titled “School Psychology,” and
- C. Successfully completing a 1,200 clock hour supervised internship in school psychology, at least 600 hours of which must be in a school setting, and
- D. Demonstrating competencies in the domains of professional practice as specified in the current standards through the portfolio submitted with the NCSP application, and
- E. Demonstrating competency through the case study submitted with the NCSP application that is consistent with performance-based outcomes, and
- F. Achieving a passing score on the Educational Testing Service’s (ETS) Praxis School Psychology Examination as determined by the National School Psychology Certification Board.

Praxis School Psychology Examination

The examination required by the National School Psychology Certification System is the Praxis School Psychology Examination (test #5402) administered by the Educational Testing Service (ETS) as part of the Praxis Program. NASP participates in the development process of the exam. Application for the examination is made and a fee is paid directly to ETS—NASP does not benefit financially from the fees collected by ETS. The results of the examination must be sent by ETS directly to NASP upon request of the applicant.

A minimum passing score of 147 is currently required by the NSPCB to obtain the NCSP credential. The passing score used by NSPCB may differ from the passing score selected by individual state education or other related credentialing agencies for the purposes of earning a state credential. Passing scores will be reviewed periodically and modified as necessary (e.g., given changes to exam structure and delivery format).

The applicant must obtain a passing score on the Praxis School Psychology Exam within 10 years of when the completed application is received at the NASP office. A completed application refers to the date when *all* required information and documents (e.g., transcripts, supervisor signatures, completed application forms) are in the possession of the NASP office.

Program Completion

Program completion must be documented through the submission of all graduate transcripts that apply to the completion of the school psychology program. It is possible for an individual to complete a school psychology program through documentation of successful coursework at more than one university. However, the director of the school psychology program from the university that grants the degree or certificate of completion must attest to the fact that the applicant successfully achieved all of the requirements of that specific school psychology program. This can be done by accepting coursework from other universities, through the completion of coursework at that specific university, or a combination thereof.

Certification Determination and Processing

Applicants from NASP approved or accredited programs

Applications for certification are received and processed by the NASP office. Procedures for processing applications for graduates of NASP approved or accredited programs are as follows:

1. Applications are reviewed for completeness and receipt of payment. Initial applicants are required to adhere to the NASP standards that are in place at the time of the application. Applicants must use the forms that are on the NASP website consistent with the date of the receipt of the application by the NASP office.
2. Applications that report previous violations of ethical principles on the application questionnaire are initially reviewed by members of the NSPCB and/or the NASP Director of Professional Development and Standards. If the violation requires further review, the information will be forwarded to the NASP Ethical and Professional Practices Board for an opinion regarding the individual's eligibility for certification.

3. Applications from graduates of NASP approved or accredited programs are reviewed by trained NASP staff to determine if the applicant is a graduate of a NASP approved or accredited program and if certification criteria are met. Issuance of the NCSP is approved by the Board for those candidates who meet the criteria.

Applicants from non-NASP-approved or accredited programs

Procedures for processing applications for graduates of non-NASP-approved or accredited programs include documentation that is equivalent to performance-based standards submitted by a NASP approved or accredited program. A multiple-gating review structure was developed to ensure decision-making reliability across reviewers. The procedures are as follows:

1. Applications and portfolios (including the case study) submitted by candidates who have completed non-NASP-approved/accredited programs will be submitted to the NASP office. A preliminary review will be conducted to ensure that the applicant submitted all of the required components and meets eligibility.
2. The NSPCB Chair assigns reviewers for evaluation. Prior to evaluating materials, each reviewer and NSPCB member is asked to consider whether a potential conflict of interest might exist or be perceived to exist for any reason, including factors such as prior involvement with the applicant or the applicant's institution, program, or personnel at that institution. For example, a review is never assigned to reviewers or board members who reside or work in the state in which the applicant is located.
3. Reviewers are provided access to all pertinent application materials.
4. Each application is examined independently by at least two persons who have been trained in the evaluation of NCSP applications, one of which is assigned to be the lead reviewer. A less experienced reviewer may be assigned as a third person.
5. Reviewers evaluate the documentation for both knowledge and skills within each domain in the credentialing standard based on the provided portfolio evaluation form. Review the portfolio evaluation form, which lists each domain and what key knowledge and skill indicators reviewers are looking for in each.
6. Documentation is provided that the applicant has demonstrated the ability to integrate domains of knowledge and apply professional skills in delivering a comprehensive range of services. Evidence is made available through submission of a case study and evaluated using the Case Study Rubric.
7. Reviewers provide a confidential written report to the NSPCB that contains: (a) judgments on the case study using the case study rubric as the foundation of the report, (b) judgments on compliance with each standard and domain along with specific comments on each standard and domain using the portfolio evaluation form, (c) a summary of ratings across standards, and (d) an overall judgment concerning the perceived quality of the applicant's training and skills.
8. The lead reviewer contacts other reviewers to discuss findings. The purpose of the collaborative conversation is to consult with peers regarding issues and concerns that the reviewer may have, as well as to support the ongoing development of all reviewers. There is no obligation for

complete agreement regarding the individual reviews. Each reviewer submits an individual report to the NSPCB Chair.

9. Reviewers' ratings and recommendations are then considered by the NSPCB. Members of the NSPCB carefully examine the information provided by reviewers and, as necessary, consult the actual application materials to formulate a decision concerning approval.
10. A summary of the findings and a decision letter are then prepared by the Chair and transmitted to the NASP office.
11. The office sends a copy of the final report and associated letter to the applicant.

Note. Applicants who are approved receive the credential. Application materials from applicants who are not approved are maintained by the NASP office. Applicants are entitled to two reviews for each fee submitted. Each review, regardless of whether it is the first or second submission (with regard to the fee), progresses from the last review. For example, when an application is submitted to the office for the third time, it includes a copy of the letter and final report from the second review along with materials to address those areas that were determined to be unacceptable during the previous review and the new processing fee. In other words, subsequent submissions for the portfolio need only address areas viewed as deficient in the previous submission. A deficient case study requires the submission of a new case study.

12. Copies of application review summaries are maintained by the NASP office and the Chair of the NSPCB and shall remain confidential.

Renewal and Continuing Professional Development Requirement

The NCSP credential is valid for 3 years unless revoked. The credential must be renewed by the expiration date, or it will expire. NCSPs are given a grace period of 1 calendar month to renew the credential before a late fee is assessed. Renewal of the NCSP comprises the following:

- The NCSP credential expires 36 months from the month the initial application is processed, or from the date of the most recent renewal. The expiration date is always the last day of the month. Renewal reminders will be sent prior to expiration, but the responsibility for renewing in a timely fashion remains solely on the individual holding the credential. Failure to receive email reminders will not eliminate the individual's responsibility to renew; email reminders are provided as a courtesy.
- Renewal requires the completion of 75 contact hours within 3 calendar years of the renewal date, 10 hours of which must be from NASP- and/or APA-approved providers. In addition, 3 of the 75 hours must be on topics related to legal regulation or ethical professional practices in school psychology. Please refer <https://www.nasponline.org/standards-and-certification/national-certification/ncsp-renewal/cpd-guidelines> for the CPD Guidelines.
- Successful renewal of the NCSP will be acknowledged via email or letter.

For those applying for the initial renewal of the NCSP credential in January 2019 or later, there should be evidence of having successfully completed a minimum of 1 academic year of professional

support from a mentor or supervisor. For professional practice within a school setting, supervision or mentoring shall be provided by a credentialed school psychologist with a minimum of 3 years of experience. For any portion of the experience that is accumulated in a nonschool setting, supervision or mentoring shall be provided by a psychologist appropriately credentialed for practice in that setting. Supervision and/or mentoring, conducted either individually or within a group, for a minimum average of 1 hour per week is recommended.

Audits will be conducted at random for every 10th individual who renews. Those individuals who have submitted renewal paperwork and are randomly selected for an audit, are notified via a letter outlining the time period (60 days) and the process by which they must send their documentation of continuing professional development. Individuals who do not submit all acceptable audit materials will not have their NCSP renewed and will be notified to that effect. Documentation submitted for an audit will not be returned. Copies of the documentation are acceptable.

The NCSP credential expires on the renewal date if not renewed. The use of the NCSP designation by individuals who have not renewed is a violation of NASP's Principles for Professional Ethics. If the nonrenewal period is 3 years or less, the applicant may reactivate their NCSP by paying all fees in arrears and documenting the required continuing professional development hours within 36-months of the reactivation request. Fees in arrears will be calculated as one sixth of the renewal fee for every 6 month period or part thereof past the expiration date (i.e., in addition to the current renewal fee, NASP members pay one sixth of the member NCSP renewal fee, and nonmembers pay one sixth of the nonmember NCSP renewal fee for every 6 month period or part thereof past the expiration date). If the nonrenewal period exceeds 3 years, then the applicant must reapply and meet the most current NCSP eligibility criteria.

Fees in arrears begin accruing 30 days after the credential expires.

Special Renewal Situations

Renewal More Than 1 Month Prior to Expiration

Any NCSP who earns the required CPD credits prior to the expiration date may renew early. Renewing early allows flexibility for an NCSP to begin accruing CPD credits for the next renewal cycle. For example, suppose an individual has earned 75 CPD credits by June 2025, but their credential does not expire until December 2025. The individual may renew in June 2025, receive a new expiration date of June 30, 2028, and use all CPD credit earned during and after June 2025 for the next renewal cycle. Importantly, CPD credits from a previous renewal cycle may not be resubmitted. CPD credit above the required 75 hours may *not* be carried over to the next renewal cycle. One may not prorate renewal fees for early renewal; the regular renewal fee must accompany the renewal.

Late Renewal Within 3 Years of Expiration

Once the NCSP credential expires, an individual has 3 years to renew. CPD credits are considered expired after 3 years. The 3 years are counted backward from the month the renewal materials are received in the NASP office. An individual who renews late must ensure that their CPD credits are current as of the renewal date. When an individual renews late, the expiration date of the credential is changed to the month the renewal is received. For example, suppose an individual's NCSP

credential expired on December 31, 2028. The individual submitted renewal materials along with late fees in June 2029. CPD credits earned during the period June 2026 through June 2029 must be submitted, and the individual's new expiration date will be June 30, 2032. That individual may *not* identify as holding the NCSP credential during any period where the credential was expired.

Renewal More Than 3 Years After Expiration

An individual who fails to renew the NCSP credential beyond 3 years of the expiration date must reapply for the NCSP under the current standards at the time of reapplication (rather than the requirements in place during the previous submission). The current NCSP application must be submitted with all supporting documentation. Also, when reapplying, the Praxis School Psychology Examination (#5402) may have to be retaken. ETS scores expire 10 years from the date of the exam.

Good Moral Character

A goal of the National School Psychology Certification System is to provide a national standard that can be used as a measure of professionalism by interested agencies, groups, and individuals. To that end, the NCSP Board has an interest in ensuring that the NCSP credential is only held by school psychologists exhibiting good moral character (see Appendix B) in their personal lives as well as complying with the profession's ethical standards in their professional lives.

Consistent with NASP Credentialing Standards currently in effect at the time, the NSPCB, upon recommendation of the NASP Ethics and Professional Practices Board, shall have the right to cancel, revoke, suspend or refuse to renew the credential of any Nationally Certified School Psychologist or to reprimand any school psychologist, upon proof that the school psychologist violated an ethical principle (see <http://www.nasponline.org/standards/ethics/index.aspx>).

During the review of the application, members of the NSPCB and office staff have the latitude to make inquiries for further information and verification to the applicant, the university, and/or signers of other formal application forms.

Upon discovery of inappropriate use of the NCSP (e.g., signing reports with NCSP without having an active NCSP), the Chair of the NSPCB may issue a cease and desist notification.

No action regarding revocation of an NCSP credential will be taken until a final recommendation from the Ethics and Professional Practices Board is received by the NSPCB.

Appeals Procedures

Purpose

All appeals regarding the National School Psychology Certification Board (NSPCB) decisions shall be considered by the Certification Appeals Panel. The purpose of an appeal is to determine whether there was a misapplication of standards or misinterpretation of information or documentation by the NSPCB. It is not an additional review of the appellant's entire application.

Appeals Panel Structure

The Certification Appeals Panel shall include three to five members, all of whom hold the NCSP credential and serve as active reviewers. The Certification Appeals Panel may not include a member of the current NSPCB and shall function independently from the NSPCB. None of the members of the panel can have a prior connection with the appellant.

Procedures

Applicants who have been denied the NCSP or who have had their NCSP credential revoked and wish to appeal that decision shall submit a written appeal (either digitally or by mail) to the NSPCB Chair, via the Director of Professional Development and Standards, within 90 calendar days of the date of the Board's denial or revocation letter. An appeal must be based on the contention that the Board erred in making its decision about the applicant based on the information that was submitted in the application and supporting documentation as of the last NSPCB review. Changes/additions to the original documentation will not be considered as part of the appeal. An appeal may include arguments concerning the misapplication of standards or the misinterpretation of information or documentation by the NSPCB. The written appeal must specifically outline the appellant's concerns and the issues that the appellant wishes the Certification Appeals Panel to consider.

The applicant shall submit the letter requesting an appeal to the Director of Professional Development and Standards at the NASP office. The letter is forwarded to the Certification Appeals Panel Chair and the NSPCB Chair. The Chair of the Certification Appeals Panel shall appoint up to three panel members, to review the appeal and to recommend a decision to the Chair.

In the case of denial of the NCSP, the NSPCB Chair will provide copies of the NSPCB reports, individual reviewer reports, and the most recent NCSP case study to the Certification Appeals Panel Chair; the Chair forwards these documents to the panel members. Additional documentation can be provided to the panel if desired. The Certification Appeals Panel will not be bound by the recommendations of the NSPCB, but must consider them and decide whether to revise the decisions of the NSPCB based upon whether the NSPCB misapplied standards or misinterpreted information or documentation submitted by the appellant.

In the case of revocation of an NCSP credential, the NSPCB Chair will provide copies of the NSPCB report and any submitted evidence to the Certification Appeals Panel Chair, who will then forward this document to the panel members. The Certification Appeals Panel is charged with holding the appellant to the same standards as the NSPCB Board when it comes to the issue of good moral character (see Appendix B).

The Appeals Chair will coordinate a conference call for the members of the Certification Appeals Panel in order to discuss the appeal. The Chair will participate in this conference call. Each member of the panel is expected to complete the Appeals Report Rubric (see Appendix C) and submit the report to the Appeals Chair within 48 hours of the conference call. The Appeals Chair will then consolidate the reports and forward the Certification Appeals Panel's final decision to the NSPCB Chair and to the NASP office. The NASP office will then forward the findings to the appellant.

Certification Appeals Panel members shall remain particularly sensitive to consideration of potential conflicts of interest (e.g., former or current relationships with the individual filing the

appeal, working in the same state as the appellant) and shall excuse themselves from any activities relating to consideration of the appeal. All appellant materials are kept confidential, and the reviewers' names are not released to the appellant.

If the Certification Appeals Panel Chair has had a prior connection with the appellant, the Chair must recuse themselves. A temporary chair will be appointed by the Certification Appeals Panel Chair to serve as chair for that particular appellant's appeal. This temporary chair will be selected from past panel members.

All appeals shall be reviewed and acted upon within 90 calendar days of the date of receipt of the written appeal. The decision of the Certification Appeals Panel shall be final and conveyed in writing to both the individual filing the appeal and the NSPCB.

National Directory

The Directory of Nationally Certified School Psychologists is available to the public on the NASP website: <http://www.nasponline.org/certification/ncspcheckpage.aspx> including name, city, state, NCSP status, and expiration date.

Nationally Certified School Psychologist (Retired)

The NCSP (Retired) designation was developed to allow NCSPs, when they retire, to continue to identify themselves as persons who have met the national standard of their profession. The official title of this designation will be “Nationally Certified School Psychologist (Retired)” or “NCSP (Retired).” NCSP (Retired) individuals will receive the same benefits as practicing NCSPs. This includes inclusion in the NCSP Directory. A one-time fee covers the administrative costs of the retired program.

Eligibility

All Nationally Certified School Psychologists are eligible for NCSP (Retired) status provided that the individual:

- Has ceased public and/or private remunerative activity in school psychology;
- Has held an NCSP credential (active or inactive status) for the last 9 or more consecutive years without any period of expiration; and
- Is an *active* NCSP in good standing at the time the application is received.

Individuals who use the title “Nationally Certified School Psychologist (Retired)” or “NCSP (Retired)” who are not certified with the National School Psychology Certification System, or who use the title while engaging in the practice of school psychology will be deemed in violation of the NASP *Principles for Professional Ethics*.

Should an NCSP (Retired) individual decide to reenter the workforce, the NCSP (Retired) status can convert to a full NCSP simply by completing the current CPD requirements and submitting the appropriate current recertification fee.

Inactive Nationally Certified School Psychologist

The inactive NCSP status is designed to meet the needs of those who have left the workplace temporarily because of reasons including, but not limited to, maternity leave, serious health concerns, military spouses, caregiving for ill family members, extended unemployment, Peace Corp volunteering, or long-term travel.

Eligibility

- All public or private remunerative activity as a school psychologist has ceased.
- The applicant has been an NCSP for at least 3 years.
- The applicant is an active NCSP in good standing at the time the application is received in the NASP office.

To reinstate the active NCSP from inactive status, one must complete 10 CPD credits (three NASP-approved) for each year of inactive status. An individual may hold inactive status for a *maximum* of 6 years.

Process Improvement

Multiple processes are used to continuously review and improve the processes of the NSPCB.

1. Annual discussion with the chair of the NCSP Appeals Panel Chair to discuss reasons for an appeal. Appeal decisions are final and sent to board members for their review and consideration in future decision-making.
2. Systematic and regular review of narrative feedback from portfolio/case study reviewers, including their reported time spent reviewing submissions.
3. Annual meeting at the NASP convention for experienced reviewers to review trends, discuss changes or potential changes, solicit feedback, and address concerns.
4. NSPCB and NASP work collaboratively with ETS to align the Praxis exam with NASP standards and review data on pass rates among test takers.
5. Time at board meetings designated to discuss board processes and methods to improve consistency, efficiency, and effectiveness in the implementation of the credentialing standards.

HISTORY OF THE NATIONAL SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGY CERTIFICATION SYSTEM

The Development of a National Competency Exam

In the years following the publication of “A Nation at Risk” (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983) and with the growing push for school reform, a number of states adopted legislation or regulations requiring professional competency examinations for teachers and other educational personnel.

In 1986, NASP’s leadership approved a motion to “initiate involvement through consultation and technical assistance with agencies involved in the development of competency examinations for school psychologists in order to promote the maximum consistency of such examinations with NASP standards for training, credentialing and professional practices” (Executive Board/Delegate Assembly Highlights, 1986).

Two specific initiatives followed. The first initiative involved visits with other human service professional associations that had developed and implemented a national credentialing system that included a requirement for passing a national examination. The intent of the visits was to learn as much as possible about the different credentialing systems, strategies, and procedures employed in their development and implementation, problems encountered during development or implementation, and financial considerations.

The second initiative resulted in NASP contacting the Educational Testing Service (ETS) about NASP’s interest in the school psychology examination project. ETS was receptive to NASP’s involvement in the development of such an examination, and between September 1986 and January 1987, NASP assisted with the identification of the content domains for the examination and collaborated on the development of “test item development panels” for the examination. NASP continued to work with ETS in the development of the national examination in preparation for the first “field test” in March 1988.

The Need for a National Credential

The need for a national credential in school psychology was fueled by several events. First, all of the professions related to school psychology (social work, counseling, speech and language) each had a national credential. Although NASP had its standards for training and credentialing, there was no method to recognize individuals who met those standards at a national level. It was not until 1987 that NASP began approving training programs through its relationship with the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE). However, at the time, the majority of individuals practicing school psychology had graduated from programs prior to the implementation of the program approval process.

Second, the American Speech and Hearing Association (ASHA) lobbied to insert a provision regarding credentialing into P.L. 99-457. ASHA supported the master's degree as the entry-level degree for the field. The U.S. Department of Education inserted a phrase that stated that only individuals who held the “highest credential” issued by a “state” could provide services under this act. The highest credential for all other professionals working in education settings was the master’s degree for some and the bachelor’s degree for others. However, in psychology, the highest degree was the PhD in most states at that time. NASP immediately presented this problem to the U.S. Department of Education (DOE) and the resolution was to limit the “highest credential” to those issued by “state departments of education.” However, in the process, the U.S. DOE asked NASP to identify the credentialing standards for school psychologists in the United States. At that time, there were more than 17 different sets of standards used by different states. The U.S. DOE noted that greater consistency across states would reduce confusion over who was the “real school psychologist.” NASP recognized the need for leadership at the national level to achieve this credentialing consistency and moved rapidly to develop the NCSP.

Early Standards and Grandfathering

The first draft of the National School Psychology Certification System was presented at NASP’s fall 1987 Delegate Assembly meeting in Washington, DC, and included the following requirements (a) Sixth-year, specialized level training (60 graduate semester hours) consisting of course work, practica, and an internship through an accredited institution of higher learning; (b) A minimum of 48 graduate semester hours, exclusive of credit for the internship; (c) Successful completion of an internship (full academic year, 1,200 clock hours minimum, 600 of which must be in a school setting; (d) Current certification as a school psychologist by a state certification agency; (e) Successful completion of the national examination; and (f) A requirement for continuing professional development (CPD) hours every 3 years in order to renew the NCSP credential. Graduates of NASP-approved/NCATE recognized school psychology programs automatically met the first requirement. A provision was included to grandfather individuals who, as of June 1, 1988, maintained an active license or certification from a state education agency and took the national examination.

The National School Psychology Certification System was formally adopted by the Delegate Assembly of NASP in spring 1988. Although the basic requirements for the national credential remained consistent with the draft proposal in fall 1987, a number of important changes were made in response to member input. These included:

- The requirement for state certification in school psychology was changed to read, “a state credentialing agency as a school psychologist (or equivalent) to deliver school psychological services.”
- Individuals who were grandfathered into the system would be given 3 years (until December 31, 1991) to meet the degree-level requirements of 48 semester hours (or equivalent through continuing education units) of academic credit and a full-year internship (or 2 years of experience as a credentialed school psychologist, or equivalent). Three methods were established through which the 48-hour credit requirement could be met.

The Charter Meeting of the National School Psychology Certification Board was held on October 29, 1988 at the NASP Offices in Washington, DC. This initial meeting of the Board served to

develop policy manuals, develop certificates, establish procedures for credential review, and establish the basic operations of the NSPCB.

Throughout the spring of 1989, the NSPCB worked to review credentials, issue certificates, communicate with state credentialing agencies about the NCSP, create the Directory of Nationally Certified School Psychologists, and establish procedures for ongoing review of applications. With the proliferation of NASP-approved programs came more graduates prepared to apply for the NCSP. Furthermore, as the national standards were once again revised, the criteria to earn the NCSP became more rigorous (e.g., in 1994 the NASP Standards for Graduate Preparation of School Psychologists increased the required graduate semester hours from 48 to 54, exclusive of internship). Renewal of the NCSP every 3 years also required the accrual of continuing professional development, a criterion that did not exist for the majority of SEA credentials. This new requirement set a new expectation and ethical obligation for school psychologists to continuously pursue professional growth.

Recent Changes to the NCSP Requirements

Given the substantive revisions that occurred with the 2010 standards, the NCSP Board held discussions with program directors and NASP leaders across the country to discuss issues of coursework shelf life. Implementation of new standards meant that those who graduated under previous standards could not be assured to have graduate preparation experiences that fully align with current standards. Other professional organizations were consulted about their renewal processes, and most required new applicants to meet the current standards. In 2015, the NCSP Board announced a new policy would begin January 2016, indicating that applicants of NASP-approved/accredited programs could apply within 10 years of their graduation if using the NASP-approved/accredited program route. Those who were more than 10 years after graduation would need to pursue the NCSP through the non-NASP-approved program route. In this way, new applicants would demonstrate knowledge and skills that were reflective of the current standards.

References

EB/DA Highlights. (1986). *Communiqué*, 15(3), 1–2.

National Commission on Excellence in Education. (1983). *A nation at risk: The imperative for educational reform*. Author.

DETERMINATION OF GOOD MORAL CHARACTER

A goal of the National School Psychology Certification System is to provide a national standard that can be used as a measure of professionalism by interested agencies, groups, and individuals. To that end, the NCSP Board has an interest in ensuring that the NCSP credential is only held by school psychologists exhibiting good moral character in their personal lives as well as complying with the profession's ethical standards in their professional lives.

Good moral character is a defined legal concept that details requirements for certain benefits or positions or licensure for certain professions. While not necessarily a set of character qualities, the term typically describes behaviors in which the applicants could *not* have been involved.

Applicants and renewing NCSPs are asked several questions about prior violations of ethical and professional standards and are also asked this question:

Have you ever been convicted of, or pleaded guilty or nolo contendere to, a felony, misdemeanor, or other offense, other than a minor traffic offense, in a federal, state, or municipal court?

In evaluating answers to this question and determining an applicant's fitness to hold the NCSP, the Board regards good moral character as including, but not limited to the following:

1. No conviction of, or guilty plea to, any felony crime (state or federal) involving:
 - a. The physical neglect of a child;
 - b. The physical injury or death of a child except for motor vehicle violations;
 - c. The sexual exploitation of a child;
 - d. Sexual offenses where a child is a victim;
 - e. The promotion of prostitution of a child; or
 - f. The sale or purchase of a child.
2. No conviction of any crime within the last 10 years, including motor vehicle violations, which would materially and substantially impair the individual's worthiness and ability to serve as a professional within public and private schools. In determining whether a particular conviction would materially and substantially impair the individual's worthiness and ability to practice, the following and any other relevant considerations shall be weighed:
 - a. Age and maturity at the time the criminal act was committed;
 - b. The degree of culpability required for conviction of the crime and any mitigating factors, including the motive for commission of the crime;
 - c. The classification of the criminal act and the seriousness of the actual and potential harm to persons or property;
 - d. Criminal history and the likelihood that criminal conduct will be repeated;

- e. The permissibility of service as a school psychologist within the terms of any parole or probation;
 - f. Proximity or remoteness in time of the criminal conviction; and
 - g. Any evidence offered which would support good moral character and personal fitness.
3. No behavioral problem which endangers the educational welfare or personal safety of students, teachers, or other colleagues within the educational setting.

In order to establish good moral character and personal fitness despite a criminal conviction, the applicant or NCSP holder has the responsibility to provide available evidence relative to the above considerations. The NCSP Board has the right to gather and consider additional evidence that may corroborate or negate that provided by the applicant or credential holder. If such information suggests the potential for an ethical violation, the Chair of the NSPCB will construct and forward the complaint to the chair of the Ethical and Professional Practices Committee.

CERTIFICATION APPEAL PANEL REPORT RUBRIC

Date:

Appellant’s Name:

Reviewer’s Name:

In the table below:

1. List the factors/concerns of the appellant’s appeal.
2. Address your findings for each of the factors. As you address the issues, give feedback on how denials could be addressed by the appellant in the future.
3. Our charge is to look at the appellant’s concerns and evaluate those concerns from the following perspectives (answer these concerns with a yes or no response):
 - a. was there a misapplication of standards, and/or
 - b. was there a misinterpretation of information or documentation by the NCSP Board?

The table below should be helpful in addressing each of the issues. Draw your conclusions by comparing the reviewer’s comments from the first and second reviews, and by comparing the Board’s final report to the reviewer’s comments. Additionally, use the final NCSP case study in your evaluation.

List Appellant’s Concerns/Factors of Appeal	Misapplication of Standards		Misinterpretation of Information or Documentation by NCSP Board		Decision	
					Met	Not Met
1.	YES	NO	YES	NO	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Suggestions:						
2.	YES	NO	YES	NO	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Suggestions:						
3.	YES	NO	YES	NO	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Suggestions:						
4.	YES	NO	YES	NO	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Suggestions:						
5.	YES	NO	YES	NO	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Suggestions:						

List Appellant's Concerns/Factors of Appeal	Misapplication of Standards		Misinterpretation of Information or Documentation by NCSP Board		Decision	
					Met	Not Met
6.	YES	NO	YES	NO	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Suggestions:						
7.	YES	NO	YES	NO	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Suggestions:						
8.	YES	NO	YES	NO	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Suggestions:						
9.	YES	NO	YES	NO	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Suggestions:						
10.	YES	NO	YES	NO	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Suggestions:						

OVERALL DECISION:

_____ NCSP Approval

_____ NCSP Nonapproval

WHAT ARE YOUR RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ANY FUTURE APPLICATIONS OF THIS CANDIDATE?

_____ Resubmit a completely new portfolio.

_____ Resubmit the portions of the portfolio that have not been met.

_____ Resubmit a new NCSP case study.

_____ Other (please list):

COMMENTS:

GUIDELINES FOR CPD ACTIVITIES

Ethical Practice and Legal Regulation of School Psychology CPD Requirement

An additional requirement is that NCSPs must accrue 3 hours of CPD regarding ethical practice and/or the legal regulation of school psychology during each 3-year renewal period. Legal regulation of school psychology refers to IDEA, NCLB, Section 504, and similar issues. This requirement may be met with any appropriate CPD activity category.

NASP- or APA-Approved CPD Requirement

NCSPs must obtain at least 10 of the 75 required CPD hours from NASP- or APA-approved providers of professional development.

The NASP-Approved Provider System was created to assist school psychologists in obtaining quality professional development. NASP-approved providers must demonstrate that their offerings align with NASP practice guidelines, are provided by qualified professionals, and are intended to enhance professional competencies, skills, or knowledge. A list of approved providers is available at www.nasponline.org/certification. NASP also accepts credits from providers approved by the American Psychological Association (APA).

CPD Activity Categories (more details available at http://www.nasponline.org/certification/renew_cpdcategories.aspx)

NASP recognizes the following types of activities as appropriate for CPD credit:

- CATEGORY A: Attendance at workshops, conferences, and inservice activities (Max. None)
- CATEGORY B: College and university coursework (Max. None)
- CATEGORY C: Providing training and inservice activities (Max. 30 hours)
- CATEGORY D: Research and publications (Max. 25 hours)
- CATEGORY E: Supervision or mentorship of graduate students or early career professionals (Max. 20 hours)
- CATEGORY F: Supervised or mentored experience (Max. 20 hours)
- CATEGORY G: Program planning and evaluation (Max. 25 hours)
- CATEGORY H: Self-study: Formal structured or informal programs (Max. 25 hours) See website link for expanded options during the 2020-2023 cycle due to COVID-19 restrictions.
- CATEGORY I: Professional organization leadership (Max. 10 hours)

CPD Credit

One CPD credit is defined as one contact hour or an actual clock hour (60 minutes) spent in direct participation, as a learner, in a structured educational activity. Credit can be awarded in 15 minute increments (i.e., 0.25 hours).

Types of Documentation

The following forms of documentation are acceptable:

- Documentation of attendance or log sheets of participation provided by the CPD sponsor.
- Official transcripts for college or university credit.
- Summary reports used by states, school districts, or other agencies or organizations where professional development is required.