



THE EPPP:  
ONE EXAM, TWO PARTS

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# LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. List the ASPPB's reasons for requiring a two-part licensure exam.
2. Summarize the developmental process utilized to create and validate the EPPP (Part 2 – Skills).
3. Describe the content areas and structure of the EPPP (Part 2 – Skills).
4. Identify remaining questions regarding the implementation of the EPPP (Part 2 – Skills) in Missouri.

# WHAT IS THE ASSOCIATION OF STATE AND PROVINCIAL PSYCHOLOGY BOARDS?

[asppb.net](http://asppb.net)

The ASPPB is an alliance of state, provincial, and territorial agencies responsible for the licensure and certification of psychologists throughout the US & CA.

ASPPB was formed to serve psychology boards; currently, the boards of all 50 states, DC, the US Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico, Guam, the Northern Mariana Islands, and all 10 provinces of Canada are ASPPB members.

## **ASPPB's Mission:**

To support member jurisdictions in fulfilling their responsibility of public protection.

# HOW DID WE GET HERE? A ROADMAP

ASPPB established in 1961 by the APA's Board of Professional Affairs, with a key objective of facilitating interstate mobility for psychologists.

In 2010, ASPPB forms task force to initiate development of a skills-based assessment

The first EPPP was given in 1965 to assess the knowledge of candidates seeking to practice psychology; slow but steady adoption through the mid 80's.

The APA Education Directorate issues a "Blueprint for Health Service Psychology Training and Education," which directs training and credentialing communities to focus on acquisition and assessment of competencies

# HOW DID WE GET HERE? A ROADMAP

In 2016, ASPPB began the Job Task Analysis to review and validate competencies to form the foundation of a skills-based exam.

Today the EPPP-1 is administered 7000+ times per year, and it is impossible to receive a license in the US without passing the exam.

In 2020, the EPPP (Part 2 – Skills) is launched in “early adopter” states and territories.

Both parts of the EPPP will be required for licensure in all member jurisdictions starting in January 2026.

# WHY A SECOND EXAM?

Licensing Boards are charged with ensuring that licensure candidates are competent to practice.



Many jurisdictions would like better information about candidate skills, and skill assessment has been left to each individual jurisdiction.



The EPPP (Part 1-Knowledge) allows candidates to demonstrate a universal standard of foundational **knowledge**.

The EPPP (Part 2-Skills) provides a valid, reliable, and legally defensible measure for regulators to assess their candidates' demonstration of a universal standard of **skills**.

# SIDE BY SIDE NARRATIVE COMPARISON

## PART 1 - KNOWLEDGE

- Provides licensure boards with information on their candidates' general knowledge of psychology and many other aspects of the foundational knowledge that psychologists are taught in graduate school.
- **This will become the prerequisite for the skills-based portion of the EPPP.**

## PART 2 – SKILLS

- Provides information to licensing boards regarding the candidate's ability to show what they would DO in an applied setting.
- Includes questions about applied, real-world situations that psychologists face in practice.
- This has never been assessed through a universal standard across different jurisdictions.

# VALIDATION OF LICENSING EXAMS

- Both parts were developed using procedures outlined in the Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing, including standard setting procedures that determine pass points representing the minimal skills required for entry-level practice.
- The accepted standard of validity for licensing exams is **evidence of content validity**, which is primarily determined through a Job Task Analysis.
- Predictive validity is not the standard for credentialing exams  
Prediction of future outcomes is beyond the scope of the exam, as it was developed to demonstrate a foundational level of knowledge, skills, and judgment required for effective performance.



# VALIDATION PROCESS OF THE EPPP (PART 2 – SKILLS)

## Job Task Analysis

- Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) establish knowledge and skills required for practice in psychology.
- Results sent in survey form to LPs to determine which areas are important for entry level practice.
- Results establish the specifications (blueprint) for the exam.

## Item Writing

- SMEs write exam questions according to specifications from the Job Task Analysis. All writers are LPs in the US or Canada.

## Item Review

- Each item is reviewed by a domain SME on the Item Development Committee.
- Items are reviewed iteratively between the reviewer and writer until the item is acceptable to both parties or discarded.

# VALIDATION PROCESS OF THE EPPP (PART 2 – SKILLS)

## Exam Form Review

- Each item reviewed again by the Examination Committee before being placed on an exam.
- The committee is comprised of 10 SMEs with expertise in each of the domains on the exam, representing various areas of practice and training.
- IDC-approved items are again reviewed for accuracy, relevance to practice, clarity, and freedom from bias, among other factors.

## Psychometric Review

- After approval is given by the Examination Committee, items are pretested (or beta tested) prior to becoming an active, scored item on an exam.
- Items that do not perform well by psychometric standards during pretesting are not included on a candidate's overall scores.

## Standard Setting

- A rigorous review process through which the pass point of the exam is established.
- A committee of SMEs, primarily ECPs, review the exam form item by item and provide rating data on difficulty.
- The data is analyzed to determine the appropriate pass point that represents minimal knowledge or skills required for entry level practice.

# ADDRESSING POTENTIAL BIAS

- Items that were answered differently by certain groups (i.e., groups differing by sex or race/ethnicity) are “flagged” and reviewed by an independent committee of psychologists who have expertise in cultural humility and experience working with underrepresented groups.
- This group evaluates these flagged items and determines if there is anything that is irrelevant to the measured construct and results in different performance for a particular group. If that is the case, those items are removed from being operational items.
- To date, ASPPB has evaluated over 1,300 items using the DIF analysis, with 32 items being statistically flagged. Of the 32 flagged items, 7 were removed for potential wording concerns.

# CONTENT AREA COMPARISON

## PART 1 – KNOWLEDGE

Assessment and Diagnosis (16%)

Ethical/Legal/Professional Issues (16%)

Treatment, Intervention, Prevention and Supervision (15%)

Cognitive–Affective Bases of Behavior (13%)

Growth and Lifespan Development (12%)

Social and Cultural Bases of Behavior (11%)

Biological Bases of Behavior (10%)

Research Methods and Statistics (7%)

## PART 2 – SKILLS

Assessment and Intervention (33%)

Collaboration, Consultation, Supervision (17%)

Ethical Practice (17%)

Relational Competence (16%)

Professionalism (11%)

Scientific Orientation (6%)

CONTENT  
DOMAIN:  
ASSESSMENT &  
INTERVENTION  
( 33 % )

Involves the provision of psychological assessment and intervention services to the public.

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2.1: Apply knowledge of individual and diversity characteristics in assessment and diagnosis.

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2.2: Demonstrate effective interviewing skills.

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2.3: Administer and score instruments following current guidelines and research.

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2.4: Interpret and synthesize results from multiple sources (e.g., multiple methods of assessment, written documentation, interviewees, collateral sources of information) following current guidelines and research.

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2.5: Formulate and communicate diagnoses, recommendations, and/or professional opinions using relevant criteria and considering all assessment data.

CONTENT  
DOMAIN:  
COLLABORATION,  
CONSULTATION,  
SUPERVISION  
( 17 % )

involves the ability to understand and work with individuals within broader systems and includes the skills to operate effectively and ethically within organizational structures, to collaborate with others in a cooperative, multidisciplinary manner and to effectively and ethically provide supervision to students, trainees and other professionals.

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6.1: Work effectively within organizations and systems.

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6.2: Demonstrate interdisciplinary collaborations.

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6.3: Consult and collaborate within and across professions.

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6.4: Evaluate service or program effectiveness across a variety of contexts.

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6.5: Ensure supervisee compliance with policies and procedures of the setting, the profession, and the jurisdiction.

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6.6: Monitor, evaluate, and accurately and sensitively communicate supervisee performance to the supervisee, the organization, and the jurisdiction as needed.

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6.7: Create and maintain a supportive environment in which effective supervision occurs for trainees and other professionals being supervised.

C O N T E N T  
D O M A I N :  
E T H I C A L  
P R A C T I C E ( 1 7 % )

involves the ability to apply both the ethical codes of the profession and the laws and regulations that govern the practice of psychology.

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5.1: Demonstrate and promote values and behaviors commensurate with standards of practice, including ethics codes, laws, and regulations.

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5.2: Accurately represent and document work performed in professional practice and scholarship.

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5.3: Implement ethical practice management.

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5.4: Establish and maintain a process that promotes ethical decision-making.

C O N T E N T  
D O M A I N :  
R E L A T I O N A L  
C O M P E T E N C E

( 1 6 % )

includes the ability to engage in meaningful and helpful professional relationships, as well as to understand and interact appropriately in a variety of diverse cultural and social contexts. It includes the two sub-categories of diversity and relationships.

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3.1: Integrate and apply theory, research, professional guidelines, and personal understanding about social contexts to work effectively with diverse clients.

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3.2: Work effectively with individuals, families, groups, communities, and/or organizations.

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3.3: Demonstrate respect for others in all areas of professional practice.

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3.4: Identify and manage interpersonal conflict between self and others.



C O N T E N T  
D O M A I N :  
P R O F E S S I O N A L I S M  
( 1 1 % )

includes personal competence, the ability to identify and observe the boundaries of competence and reflective practice, the ability to be self-reflective and to receive feedback from others in relationship to one's psychological activities.

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4.1: Identify and observe boundaries of competence in all areas of professional practice.

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4.2: Critically evaluate one's own professional practice through self-reflection and feedback from others.

CONTENT  
DOMAIN:  
SCIENTIFIC  
ORIENTATION TO  
PRACTICE (6%)

Involves an orientation to the knowledge developed through the science of psychology, including evidence-based practice, as well as a scientific method of looking at and responding to psychological problems.

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1.1: Select relevant research literature and critically review its assumptions, conceptualization, methodology, interpretation, and generalizability

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1.2: Acquire and disseminate knowledge in accord with scientific and ethical principles

# SIDE BY SIDE COMPARISON: STRUCTURE

## PART 1 – KNOWLEDGE (\$600)

- 225 Multiple Choice questions
  - 175 are scored
  - 50 are experimental items being assessed for future use and do not count
- 4:15 to complete the exam
- Raw scores converted to a scaled score between 200 and 800; the cut score is 500, roughly 70% correct

## PART 2 – SKILLS (\$450)

- 170 items
  - 130 are scored
  - 40 are unscored pre-test items
- Passing scaled score of 500
- 4:15 to complete the exam
- Includes a variety of question formats:
  - multiple choice/response (45%)
  - scenarios (45%), and
  - other formats (10%): ‘drag and drop’ and ‘point and click’

# QUESTION TYPES

- Multiple Choice with single response
- Multiple Choice with multiple response
- Scenarios that can include:
  - Animation with video/audio
  - A description of an interview
  - A test protocol
  - Other data that adds informationEach scenario can have up to 5 questions
- Point and Click
  - A graphical image is presented, and the candidate may select one or more areas of the image to indicate a response
- Drag and Drop
  - Matching multiple appropriate stimuli on the left side of the screen to an appropriate response on the right side of the screen

# MULTIPLE CHOICE WITH SINGLE RESPONSE

## **SAMPLE QUESTION:**

A psychologist is supervising an intern who comes to supervision unsure whether to use cognitive behavior therapy (CBT) or behavioral activation (BA) to treat her client who has moderate depression. The supervisor has a preference for BA. The intern asks the supervisor which approach she should use with the client. How should the supervisor communicate the efficacy of CBT and BA to the intern?

- A. Describe the personal bias of the supervisor for BA and ask the intern to discuss her preference
- B. Present BA and CBT as efficacious treatments, and discuss why the supervisor has a personal preference for BA.
- C. Present BA and CBT as efficacious treatments, and discuss the pros and cons for both BA and CBT.

ANSWER: C

(ASPPB, 2024)

# SCENARIO

A 23 year-old male presents for an intake session with a psychologist. As he enters the office, the client notices a rainbow flag and 'Safe Space' sticker on the door. During the clinical interview, the client states, "I saw your rainbow flag stickers in your door. I think I may have seen you walking around at the LGBT pride festival. I'm really glad to be working with a gay psychologist." What is the most appropriate response for the psychologist to make?

- A. The psychologist should ignore the comment and move on with the remainder of the clinical interview as planned in order to not reinforce the client's statement.
- B. "Thank you for noticing. I support all of the clients that I work with regardless of how they identify. Since you said you may have seen me at the festival, I'm wondering how you think that may impact our working together in therapy."
- C. "I'm not gay, I was there with a friend of mine. In case this happens in the future, I want you to know that your relationship with me is confidential."

# “POINT AND CLICK”

A psychologist is using cognitive-behavioral therapy to treat a client. The client arrives to a follow up session with an automatic thought record completed. The client describes feeling frustrated with the thought record and does not believe that it helped. The psychologist reviewed the record and noted that the client did not utilize the record in the correct manner. Identify the four regions with errors in the thought record below:

The purple area shows that that area has been selected. The yellow color is a highlight that indicates when the candidate hovers over a 'hot area.'

SITUATION	EMOTION	AUTOMATIC THOUGHT	RATIONAL RESPONSE	OUTCOME
1. Describe the event leading up to an unpleasant emotion	1. Specify the emotion 2. Rate the degree of emotion, 0 – 100%	1. Write the automatic thought that preceded the emotion 2. Rate belief in automatic thoughts, 0 – 100%	1. Write a rational response to automatic thought. 2. Rate belief in rational response.	1. Re-rate belief in automatic thought, 0 – 100% 2. Specify and rate subsequent emotions, 0 – 100%
Argument with co-worker over cleaning up the breakroom after lunch	1. Anger 2. 85%	1. I always have to clean up around here 2. 100%	1. My co-worker takes out the trash at the end of the day 2. 50%	1. 75% 2. Frustration, 75%
Car did not starts in the morning and I was late for work	1. Nothing ever goes my way 2. 100%	1. I am going to get fired 2. 100%	1. I need to buy a new car 2. 100%	1. 100% 2. Angry, 100%
I missed a deadline at work	1. Everyone at work must hate me 2. 85%	1. I am never getting promoted 2. 100%	1. I should find a different job 2. 100%	1. 100% 2. Angry, 100%

# “POINT AND CLICK”

John Smith is a clinical psychology doctoral candidate who has created a business card for his current practicum placement. Click two (2) elements of the card that represent a **violation** of the APA and CPA ethics codes.

John Smith, Ph.D. Candidate  
Clinical Psychologist  
Specialty: School Refusal

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HONOR: American Psychological Association, Member

"There is beauty in struggle"



# ENHANCED MATCHING (DRAG & DROP)

A large healthcare organization recently conducted an employee satisfaction survey. The results showed much dissatisfaction among several departments and the management team desires to hire a consultant to assist the organization in improving employee satisfaction. A member of the management team reaches out to the Director of Behavioral Health, a psychologist within the organization, and inquires about hiring an internal versus external consultant. The Director of Behavioral Health should encourage the management team to consider the costs and benefits of each type of consultant in their decision-making process. What should be communicated to the management team?

Drag the benefit on the left to the appropriate type of consultant on the right (not all benefits will be used)

Benefit	Type of Consultant
Will cost less.	<b>Internal Consultant</b>  Can more easily be direct and confronting.  Knows the language of the organization and how to express ideas in an acceptable way.
	<b>External Consultant</b>  Employees are more likely to be open.  Can work unobtrusively at times.

# ASPPB'S SUGGESTED EPPP TIMELINE

- ASPPB recommends that the timing of the EPPP (Part 1 – Knowledge) be shifted to the point of knowledge acquisition: when all foundational coursework is completed and prior to or during internship. Pass rates tend to be higher and this reduces delays at the culminating point of licensure.
- EPPP (Part 2 – Skills) is recommended to be taken after all supervised experience is completed.

# POTENTIAL BENEFITS OF THE NEW TESTING SCHEDULE



Additional peer support and loan money to finance the exam fees (this mirrors medical students' process)



Reduced reliance on expensive test preparation materials



Added value as a gatekeeping mechanism earlier in training, when remediation is easier and more effective



Additional responsibility may be placed on the training programs to prepare students to pass the EPPP-1



The earlier schedule may increase pass rates by placing the test closer to classroom work

# CRITICISMS

- Jurisdictional inconsistency
- Validation debates
- Potential consequences for doctoral training
- Legal challenges
- EPPP may reflect more construct-irrelevant variance than profession-specific
- Increased financial burden on students and ECPs
- Diversity and inclusion issues
  - First-time pass rates of the EPPP-1 are significantly associated with race, degree type, and accredited training – Part 2 was developed using the same methods
  - Increased student body diversity was associated with lower EPPP pass rates at the program level

(Callahan, et al., 2020; Macura & Ameen, 2020; Saldana, Callahan, & Cox, 2023)

# REMAINING QUESTIONS ABOUT IMPLEMENTATION

- Currently, an individual must be a candidate for licensure to be authorized for the EPPP – meaning they must apply for a license in the state in which they wish to practice

This model does not allow for students to take the exam prior to the degree being awarded, or in a state where they do not intend to be licensed (such as the state of their training or internship program). Changes are up to the discretion of each jurisdiction.

- Relatedly, will EPPP (Part 1 – Knowledge) scores be used as a measure of success/failure, or of internship readiness, if administered during (or at the end of) schooling?

# REMAINING QUESTIONS ABOUT IMPLEMENTATION

- Implementation timeline variable by state, but will be required by all state boards by January 2026. Currently required by:

District of Columbia

Georgia

Guam

Manitoba

Nevada

Newfoundland and Labrador

Prince Edward Island

- Is an already-licensed psychologist required to take the new exam to become licensed in a new jurisdiction?

The ASPPB recommendation is that jurisdictions requiring both parts only require transfer candidates to take Part 2 if they were initially licensed after the receiving jurisdiction required candidates to pass both parts of the exam. **However**, individual jurisdictions may require all applicants to follow the same process.



QUESTIONS?

# REFERENCES

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