

ABPP Board Certification in Clinical Neuropsychology

What You Should Know

For Students & Trainees



Acknowledgments

- Armstrong, K., Beebe, D.W., Hilsabeck, R.C., & Kirkwood, M.W. (2008).

A Step-by-Step Guide to ABPP/ABCN Certification in Clinical Neuropsychology: How to Become Boarded Without Sacrificing Your Sanity. New York: Oxford University Press.



The ABC's of ABPP Board Certification

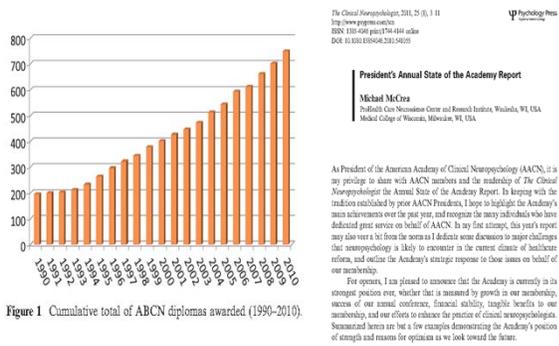
- **APA** - American Psychological Association (1892)
 - ✓ Primary professional membership and advocacy association for professional psychology
- **ABPP** – American Board of Professional Psychology – Created (1947).
 - ✓ Comprised of a unitary governing body and 13 affiliated specialty boards each linked to specific sub-disciplines



The ABC's of ABPP Board Certification (cont.)

- **ABCN** – American Board of Clinical Neuropsychology (1981)
 - ✓ The ABPP specialty board responsible for developing and implementing the assessment procedures specific to clinical neuropsychology
- **AACN** – American Academy of Clinical Neuropsychology (1996)
 - ✓ Membership organization comprised of ABPP/ABCN board certified neuropsychologists
 - ✓ Legally separate from ABCN
 - ✓ Focuses on advocacy and education

AACN Membership Growth



AACN Membership

- Full membership (ABCN certified)
- Affiliate membership
- Student membership*
- Senior/Honorary membership

*AACN Student Advocacy Scholarships for Conference Attendance

The 4 Steps to Board Certification through ABPP/ABCN

- (1) **Application:**
 - basic eligibility criteria and credential review
- (2) **Written Examination**
 - 100 Question Test – 2 hour time limit
 - ≥70 or higher score passes
 - Administered 4 times a year at the major neuropsychology conferences
 - ✓ INS, NAN, APA – Division 40, & AACN
- (3) **Practice Samples**
 - 2 original neuropsychological exam reports
- (4) **Oral Examination**
 - Fact Finding, Practice Sample, Ethics

AACN Strategic Priorities

- 1. Clinical Practice Standards:** Continue the Growth of AACN Through Active Promotion of ABCN Certification as the Highest Standard of Competency in Clinical Neuropsychology
- 2. Clinical & Quality Outcomes Research:** Actively Support the Core Mission and Strategic Initiatives of the AACN Foundation
- 3. Advocacy & Policy:** Support Initiatives that Demonstrate the Unique Value of Clinical Neuropsychology and that will Impact Policy Affecting Clinical Practice
- 4. Education & Training:** Further Establish AACN's Profile as the Premier Source of Continuing Education in Clinical Neuropsychology

ABCN/AACN Resources

- ABPP (www.abpp.org)
- ABCN (www.theabcn.org)
- AACN (www.theaacn.org)
- AACN Foundation (www.aacnf.org)
- Being Ready for ABCN Certification In Clinical Neuropsychology (BRAIN)

Resources To Guide Your ABPP Preparation BRAIN

- BRAIN** (http://brain.aacnwiki.org/index.php?title=Main_Page)
- ✓ A listserv/peer neuropsychologists who are already boarded or who are working through the process
 - ✓ Advice on how to approach each step of the certification process (both via the website and the listserv)
 - ✓ Study outlines, flash cards, sample tests, and sample study schedules, and
 - ✓ For listserv members, coordinated study and support groups for the ABPP/ABCN written and oral examinations

Benefits of Board Certification in Neuropsychology

ABPP/ABCN board certification benefits:

- **The practitioner**
 - Recognized credibility
 - Better pay, job security, provider status
 - Simplified, mobile credential
- **The public**
 - Assurances of quality and service to consumers
 - Mission toward evidence-based practice
- **The profession**
 - Accepted standards for training, competence, quality, ethics
 - Increased breadth and depth of knowledge, science, care
 - Strength on issues of public policy

The AACN Value Proposition

- **Clinical Practice Resources**
 - Position Statements on Best Practice
 - Practice Advisory Group
- **Education & Training**
 - AACN Annual Conference
 - BRAIN
- **Publications**
 - The Clinical Neuropsychologist (TCN)
 - Child Neuropsychology
 - Oxford Workshop Series
 - Psychology Press Series
 - Child Neuropsychology
- **Online Resources**
 - www.theaacn.org
- **Research**
 - Clinical Outcomes Consortium
 - AACN Foundation Grants Program
- **Advocacy**
 - AACN/ABCN Joint Subcommittee on Promotion of Board Certification
 - Special Interest Groups – Pediatric
 - Student Advocacy
- **Peer Communication**
 - AACN Member and Community Listserv

Excellence in Clinical Practice

AACN
American Academy of
Clinical Neuropsychology

Join us next year for the
**9th Annual
AACN Conference
in Washington, DC**



June 9-11, 2011
**Hyatt Regency Washington
Capitol Hill**

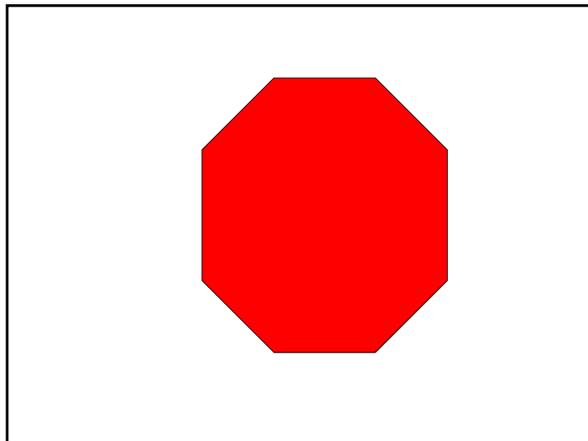
American Academy of Clinical Neuropsychology
www.TheAACN.org

**See You in
Washington
DC!**



**American Academy of
Clinical Neuropsychology**

Solid Foundation, Bright Future!



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Clinical Neuropsychology

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TCN: Valued Resource

- "Proceedings of the International Conference on Behavioral Health and Traumatic Brain Injury" Special Issue
- "Board Certification in Professional Psychology: Promoting Competency and Consumer Protection" by David Cox, ABPP Executive Officer
- A special issue on "Advocacy in Neuropsychology" with Guest Editors Laura Howe and Neil Pliskin
 - 12 articles on various aspects of advocacy to increase general awareness of neuropsychology, the science and practice of neuropsychology, and the intersection of neuropsychology and the law.
- "American Academy of Clinical Neuropsychology Consensus Statement on the Role of the Neuropsychologist"

Available Free On-line at
www.theaacn.org

Bush
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Benefits to the Practitioner

1. Credibility in the eyes of colleagues, referral sources, trainees, and patients
 - ✓ Board certification is considered the norm in medical specialties, and is also used increasingly in allied health professions, e.g., in pharmacy.
 - ✓ ABPP-CN is the oldest credentialing standard for neuropsychologists, and AACN has the largest number of board certified neuropsychologists.

Benefits to the Practitioner (cont.)

2. Better Pay and Job Security
 - ✓ Some institutions specifically link bonuses, promotions, hospital privileges to board certification
 - ✓ Some (albeit very few) institutions are beginning to require board certification as a condition of employment
 - ✓ Associated with pay differentials in the armed services and pay differential in the VA systems
 - ✓ May SAVE you money as well

Benefits to the Practitioner (cont.)

3. Simplified credentialing/license and practice mobility
 - ✓ Can streamline licensing process in some states
 - ✓ Can help when joining insurance panels
4. Personal and professional development

Benefits to the Public - One mission of ABPP/ABCN is to protect the public by:

- Enhancing Quality of Services/Quality assurance through:
 - Verifying the competency and expertise of psychologists providing consultation regarding clinical neuropsychology to the public and its institutions.
 - Credible self-regulation via meaningful examination and peer review process.
 - Professional accountability.

Benefits to the Profession

1. Establishes clear standards for competence
2. Increased breadth and depth of knowledge base of credentialed practitioners

From the BCP committee

- This presentation was developed with the idea of helping AACN members share information about the ABCN board certification process. Since faculty members and clinicians will be speaking to different student populations with some variability in goals, the slides were created to provide a broad overview of a wide number of topics. We understand that some material may be less relevant for some audiences, and/or may include more details than may be appropriate for an initial introduction to ABCN. We invite you to condense the material and/or selectively remove slides to best suit your audience

Overview of Presentation

- 1) The ABC's of ABPP Board Certification
- 2) The benefits of Board Certification in Neuropsychology
- 3) Demystifying the ABPP board certification process
- 4) Advice, strategies and recommendations to help make ABPP DOABLE for YOU

Common Questions & Myths Regarding Board Certification

- 1) "My supervisors and many of the neuropsychologists I work with and respect are not board certified, why should I be?"
 - ✓ Relative to medical field, board certification in psychology is relatively new
 - ✓ ABPP, and particularly ABCN has been growing very rapidly.
 - ✓ The number of new certifications in ABCN has either exceeded any other ABPP subspecialty, or been a close second to the clinical psychology subspecialty

Common Question & Myths Regarding Board Certification (cont.)

- 2) I have heard that ABCN is an "Old Boys Network."
 - ✓ ABCN has worked diligently and carefully to help assure a fair evaluative process.
 - ✓ For 50% of the ABPP process your evaluators are "blinded" to any identifying information about the examinees.
 - ✓ As of 2006 almost half of the members of AACN were women.

Common Question & Myths Regarding Board Certification (cont.)

- 3) ABCN is biased against pediatric/child clinical neuropsychologists."
 - ✓ Just under half of ABPP/ABCN certified clinicians work exclusively with children or with both adults and children (Sweet et al., 2006)
 - ✓ The written examination covers the **entire age spectrum** and includes specialized pediatric knowledge:
 - Many "adult" questions are actually general knowledge questions regarding brain-behavior relationships
 - There are also questions regarding child development
 - The rest of the examination process will focus on your preferred population (adult or pediatric)

Common Question & Myths Regarding Board Certification (cont.)

- 4) You need to be in the field for X years to be board eligible (i.e. ready to sit for the written examination)."
 - ✓ Historically there was a waiting period post licensure that applicants had to wait prior to being board eligible.
 - ✓ This is no longer the case.
 - ✓ Once a candidate has completed the necessary training and licensure requisites he or she is considered board eligible

Common Question & Myths Regarding Board Certification (cont.)

5. The preparation process for seeking board certification is hugely time-consuming."
 - ABCN's goal is to facilitate this process and make it as easy as possible for students/trainees.
 - Early Entry Application: Allows Graduate students to apply for ABPP while in training.
 - A number of web resources for this process are available.

ABPP Early Entry Application

- Submission of the application and a \$25 fee allows you to start the process and ABPP will “bank” your credentials as you complete your training and credentials
- You can submit each credential/license as they are completed and ABPP will simply update your file
- Saves you \$100

Resources To Guide Your ABPP Preparation

1) ABPP (www.abpp.org)

- ✓ An overview of ABPP and what board certification means to psychology and to the public
- ✓ A summary description of the ABPP and ABCN requirements
- ✓ Important forms that you will need at each step of the ABPP/ABCN certification process.

Resources To Guide Your ABPP Preparation (cont.)

2) ABCN (www.theabcn.org)

- ✓ A description of ABCN and advantages to board certification
- ✓ A detailed description of the ABCN requirements
- ✓ An overview of the examination process
- ✓ A listing of examination dates and deadlines
- ✓ Answers to “frequently asked questions”
- ✓ Links to the application materials at the ABPP site and study materials at the AACN site

Resources To Guide Your ABPP Preparation (cont.)

3) AACN (www.theaacn.org)

- ✓ A description of the AACN and its mission
- ✓ Information on relevant educational programs
- ✓ Information re: the AACN **mentorship** program A study guide
- ✓ AACN-sponsored seminars on the ABPP/ABCN certification process at the major neuropsychology conferences
- ✓ AACN Oxford Workshop Book: Board Certification in Clinical Neuropsychology: A guide to becoming ABPP/ABCN certified without losing your sanity.

General Information about the ABPP Process

Fees

- (1) Application - \$125*
- (2) Written Examination - \$300
- (3) Practice Samples - \$250
- (4) Oral Examination - \$450

Early Entry Application (\$25)

The Application and Credential Review – Basic Eligibility Criteria

All Applicants must have:

1. A doctorate in Psychology (specialty can include clinical, counseling, educational, etc.)
2. A state/provincial license to practice psychology
3. *Specialty training in Neuropsychology (specifics depend on when you completed your degree)

*Specialty training materials are available at the ABCN website

The Application and Credential Review – Basic Eligibility Criteria (cont.)

For all candidates who complete training on or after 1/1/2005:

- ❑ Your background needs to conform to the training model of the Houston conference.
- ❑ Equivalent of a 2-year full-time supervised post-doctoral residency/fellowship in clinical neuropsychology.

The Application and Credential Review – Basic Eligibility Criteria (cont.)

Basic Training Areas (see also application)

1. Basic neurosciences (microarchitecture of the brain, neurochemistry, etc)
2. Basic neurosciences Clinical Neurology
3. Neuroanatomy
4. Neuropathology
5. Clinical Neuropsychological Assessment
6. Psychological Assessment
7. Psychological Intervention
8. Psychopathology

The Written Examination

What is the Process?

- 100 Question Test – 2 hour time limit
- ≥70 or higher score passes
- Administered 4 times a year at the major neuropsychology conferences
 - ✓INS, NAN, APA – Division 40, & AACN

~~The test is developed and normed with PES~~
– the same company who writes the EPPP

The Written Examination – Dos and Don'ts for Your Preparation

Do:

- Brush up on applied neuropsychology concepts
- Study diseases, disorders, and syndromes affecting the CNS
- Know your gross and functional neuroanatomy well
- Review behavioral neurology topics
- Revisit DSM and psychiatric disorders
- Remember to look over relevant psychometric and statistical topics
- Consider taking practice exams available through BRAIN and the APPCN Training Programs

The Written Examination – Dos and Don'ts for Your Preparation (cont.)

DON'T:

- Overfocus on any one specific topic
- Lose the forest for the neuroanatomical trees
- Worry about esoteric research methods or stats concepts
- Spend much time on ethics at this stage of the process

The Written Examination – Important Resources

- ✓ BRAIN website – study notes, flashcards, sample tests
- ✓ BRAIN listserv – peer support, help finding study groups, etc.
- ✓ Peer Study groups
- ✓ AACN Study Guide
- ✓ AACN Mentor

The Practice Sample Review – The Process

You submit 2 of your **ORIGINAL*** neuropsychological evaluations to ABCN as well as (online submission coming soon):

- ✓ All raw data
- ✓ Test score summary sheets
- ✓ Professional data sheet
- ✓ Cover letter (optional)
- ✓ Formatted disc with the reports, summary sheets, cover letter and professional data sheet)
- ✓ Fee

The Practice Sample Review – How to Pick Your Cases

- Do NOT try to find the perfect case – there is no such thing
- Instead:
 - ✓ Pick cases that are moderately complex, reflect your patient population, and demonstrate your understanding of neuropsychological principles

The Practice Sample Review – How to Pick Your Cases (cont.)

- Have colleagues critique your case – including at least one ABPP/ABCN neuropsychologist
- **DON'T** have colleagues or mentors help you to re-write a report but **Do** have them help you to determine if your case(s) are good choices for submitting

The Oral Examination – The last hurdle!

3 Sections of the Oral Examination

- Review of Professional and Ethical Issues
- Practice Sample Review
- Fact-Finding

The Oral Examination – What is the Process?

- Held twice a year in Chicago (in May & October/November)
- 3 1-hour blocks completed back-to-back
- Results are typically provided within 1-2 weeks (often closer to 1 week)

The Review of Professional and Ethical Issues – What is Being Assessed?

1. Your knowledge of current APA/CPA ethical codes;
2. Your understanding of HIPAA and its relevance to your practice; and
3. Your educational history, professional practice and contributions to the field.

The Review of Professional and Ethical Issues – What is the Task?

Ethical Issues:

- You will be asked to identify ethical breaches in a vignette
- You will be asked to provide an ethical dilemma that you have faced and resolved

Professional Issues:

- You will provide a summary of your educational history, professional practice, and contributions to the field of neuropsychology

Dos and Don'ts for the Ethics Portion of the Oral Examination

DO:

- Review your ethical codes standards, and pertinent laws relating to your daily practice (e.g., HIPAA)
- Review some articles/books that cover ethics applied to neuropsychology

DON'T:

- Memorize standards and numbers
- Plan on "winging it" based on the 1 or 2 times you read the ethical codes when they last came out

Practice Samples Review – What is Being Assessed?

- Your knowledge of your cases (pediatric or adult), including the diagnosed disorder and related conditions, as well as applied principles of functional neuroanatomy
- Your knowledge of psychometric principles, including your choice of test battery and its appropriateness for your particular patients

Practice Samples Review – What is the Task?

- Your examiner will ask you specific questions regarding the 2 cases you submitted
 - ✓ Questions are developed by your examiner and by the 3 (or 4) reviewers who evaluated your Practice samples

The Fact Finding – What is the Task?

After selecting your case (either a child or adult vignette) you will be expected to:

- 1) Gather all relevant case information including:
 - presenting concerns
 - relevant history
 - behavioral observations
 - testing results.

The Fact Finding – What is the Task? (cont.)

- 2) Summarize your impressions including your thoughts on:
 - ✓ Differential diagnosis (& reasoning behind ruling diagnoses out).
 - ✓ Likely neurological localization (at least in terms of anterior/posterior and left/right and/or subcortical implicating profiles)
 - ✓ Possible etiologies
 - ✓ Relevant social and psychological issues and their impact on the case and/or neuropsychological data
 - ✓ A concise summary of the testing results
 - ✓ Recommendations for treatment and possible prognoses

The Fact-Finding – Other Important Details

- You will have 50 minutes to collect the data and summarize your findings.
 - ✓ Time management is one of the biggest challenges for this task
- You will be examined using real clinical cases

The Fact-Finding – Steps to Success (cont.)

- Think about how to use your time (e.g.):
- 5 minutes to write out your template
 - 20 minutes to collect the patient's history
 - 10 minutes to collect, review and discuss test data
 - 5-10 minutes to summarize the history, data conceptualization, & present dx conclusions.
 - 5-10 minutes to discuss other possible etiologies if the examiner provides new information to you

The Fact-Finding – Other Important Details

- The goal of the Fact-Finding is not simply to figure out the patient's medical condition. It is to show the examiner how you approach neuropsychological evaluations.
- You do NOT have to determine the diagnosis or etiology of your case to pass!!!
 - Conversely, getting diagnosis correct is not sufficient for you to pass

The ABPP/ABCN Process – Final Word of Encouragement

- ABPP/ABCN board certification is not an elitist goal – it is doable for anyone who has trained to be a neuropsychology
- The PROCESS itself makes you a better neuropsychologist which in and of itself is worth pursuing.

MITO

The ABPP/ABCN Process – Final Words of Encouragement

- Consider all of the things you have accomplished in recent years:

✓ Graduated college	✓ Teaching assistantships
✓ Completed GRE	✓ Clinical practica
✓ Applied to graduate school	✓ Dissertation proposal/defense
✓ Graduate course load	✓ Internship
✓ Master's thesis proposal/defense	✓ Postdoctoral fellowship
✓ Qualifying examination	✓ Licensing examination
✓ Research requirements	✓ ABPP Board Certification
- Yes the boarding process is challenging, but the short-term investment (like many of the other things you have accomplished) is well-worth the long-term benefit!

A large number of elected positions in national neuropsychology associations are AACN members

- Board of directors for Div 40, INS & NAN
- NAN leadership
 - President: Shane Bush, ABPP-CN
 - President-Elect: Alexander Troster, ABPP-CN
 - Member-at-Large/upcoming President-Elect: Robin Hilsabeck, Ph.D., ABPP-CN

Slide 59

M10 What do you think of this?
Mayo, 8/30/2010

ABPP/ABCN neuropsychologists who are editors
of major neuropsychology journals

- Russell Bauer, Ph., ABPP-CN &
Jerry Sweet, Ph.D., ABPP-CN:
The Clinical Neuropsychologist (TCN)
- Kathleen Haaland, Ph.D., ABPP-CN:
**Journal of the International Neuropsychological Society
(JINS)**
- Jacobus Donders, Ph.D., ABPP-CN &
Michael Westerveld, Ph.D., ABPP-CN:
Child Neuropsychology