

American Board of Professional Psychology Certification

By Dominick Scalise

Once I get into a doctoral program everything will be fine... After I match on internship, then all will be right in the world... Once I land that first position, then I can relax. I wonder how many can identify with these thoughts? As students, much of what drives our pursuit of the doctoral degree is for our own personal and professional goals. As selfless as many of us can be, at some core place you entered this field for things that *you* want and that are important to *you*. Just like me (and many of us). There is nothing wrong with that in my view.

As a recently board-certified counseling psychologist, I hope to share with you a path that not only may help you continue your journey for meeting your goal toward exceling at your vocational selection, but also a path that helps to preserve a specialty within a profession that is leading the way among psychology professionals in our communities locally, nationally, and globally. You may or may not know that one of the ways that counseling psychologists continue to receive recognition for our specialty is by having a thriving and growing pool of board certified psychologists. In other words, without more counseling psychologists motivated toward taking the plunge into board certification, our specialty (counseling psychology) is at risk of being lost.

Thankfully, the American Board of Professional Psychology and the American Board of Counseling Psychology have an option to help make it easier for ECPs to step into the board certification process. You can find details of the early entry program here:

<https://legacy.abpp.org/i4a/pages/index.cfm?pageID=3558>.

I participated in the early entry option applying as I finished my internship mainly due to my goal not to disappoint trusted mentors and supervisors whom I looked up to. That was still motivated by self-serving interests I think. When it came time to follow through (when no one else was looking) several years after I was comfortable, licensed, employed, it was more about what counseling psychology needs from me. While many employers will provide salary increases or certain states may recognize ABPP certification for licensing/portability purposes, those were not directly applicable to me. When senior colleagues let me know that pursuing the early entry option was helpful to keep our specialty visible and viable to the public and to other professionals, I felt more drive to complete it. I also, if I'm honest, still didn't want to disappoint my mentors, former supervisors, and colleagues so I haven't fought my way through that completely!

While ABPP and ACoP has made it more affordable to pursue board certification, this is still a financial cost so you are encouraged to talk with your academic departments, internship training directors, and mentors to see if institutional support might be available for you or your program to support your \$25 early entry application fee which you can submit as a graduate student enrolled in an accredited doctoral program or are not yet licensed. From there, you can seek out

a mentor who can help guide you through the application process; ABPP has a google group where topics are discussed from other early entry applicants and there is a manual that outlines the steps you need to take.

Whether you plan to enter a clinical setting where board certification will be the norm (or expectation), you are looking for an edge to impress prospective employers, or you have just enough anxious thinking to invest in the protection of our specialty, I hope you will consider thinking of ways to at least ask questions of other board certified counseling psychologists. For other compelling reasons to pursue ABPP certification check out Mary O'Leary Wiley's post on the division website: <http://www.div17.org/scp-connect/general-announcements/why-become-board-certified-in-counseling-psychology/>

The American Academy of Counseling Psychology, an organization interested in increasing the visibility of board certified counseling psychologists, has also partnered with Division 17 to provide reimbursement costs for division members who successfully complete the board certification application. Advocate to your institution (assuming they appreciate our specialty) to create reimbursement options to pursue the highest credential we can pursue as a counseling psychologist to help the next group of ECPs. Training directors, you too can benefit by having your application fee waived.

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