

# Policy on Licensure Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology (SIOP)

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### Background

A special task force was assembled to reexamine SIOP's policy on licensure in 1993. A report and draft revision of the policy was published in 1995 (*The Industrial-Organizational Psychologist*, 1995, vol. 33, no. 1, pp. 12-20). Comments from the membership were collected, and further revisions were made to the policy. On April 28, 1996, the SIOP Executive Committee voted to adopt the revised policy on licensure. This revised policy reflects a three-year effort of past presidents (Mike Campion, Wally Borman, and Paul Sackett), the State Affairs Committee (chaired by Jay Thomas), a task force, the Executive Committees, and dozens of SIOP members who took the opportunity to comment.

### Preamble

Licensure of the title of "Psychologist" and/or practice of "Psychology" is restricted in many states. Industrial and Organizational Psychologists, as citizens, obey the laws in the states in which they live and work. Concurrently, it is also true that many of the work and research activities of I-O psychologists are not unique to this discipline, do not pose a threat of harm to the public, and are not subject to licensure. In accord with these principles, SIOP has formulated the following policy on licensure\*:

**SIOP recognizes that many states require that the practice of I-O psychology be licensed. SIOP members should be allowed to be licensed in those states that require such licensure, and SIOP should provide guidance to state licensing boards on how to evaluate the education and training of an I-O psychologist.**

In addition, many, if not most, I-O psychologists practice in more than one state from time to time. SIOP recognizes that some states require that I-O psychologists must be licensed in that state before practicing in that state. SIOP believes this is inappropriate for I-O Psychologists. Therefore, it is SIOP's position that:

**A licensed I-O psychologist should be allowed to practice in another state for a reasonable period of time without having to obtain a license in that state (e.g., 60 days of professional services per year).**

### Practice Definition

The Model Acts of the American Psychological Association (APA, 1987) and the Association of State and Provincial Psychology Boards (ASPPB, 1992) (these are identical) define the areas of practice which they believe are licensable as follows:

"Practice of Psychology is defined as the observation, description, evaluation, interpretation, and/or modification of human behavior by the application of psychological principles, methods, or procedures, for the purpose of preventing or eliminating symptomatic, maladaptive, or undesired behavior and/or enhancing interpersonal relationships, work and life adjustment, personal effectiveness, behavioral health and mental health. The practice of psychology includes, but is not limited to, psychological testing

and the evaluation or assessment of personal characteristics, such as intelligence, personality, abilities, interests, aptitudes, and neuropsychological functioning; counseling, psychoanalysis, psychotherapy, hypnosis, biofeedback, and behavior analysis and therapy; diagnosis and treatment of mental and emotional disorder or disability, alcoholism and substance abuse, disorders of habit or conduct, as well as psychoeducational evaluation, therapy, remediation, and consultation. Psychological services may be rendered to individuals, families, groups, organizations, institutions and the public. The practice of psychology shall be construed within the meaning of this definition without regard to whether payment is received for services rendered" [certain exemptions are noted, e.g., for teaching and research] (ASPPB, 1992, pp. 4-5).

### **Education and Training of I-O Psychologists**

There is a continuing need to work with, and to educate, boards and other public bodies regarding the profession of I-O psychology. Otherwise, well-intentioned rules appropriate for health care psychologists may be adopted which are incompatible with the role, training, and work of the I-O psychologist. In this section, SIOP has recommended provisions regarding training and experience for licensing laws and regulations so these situations may be avoided.

The regulation of a profession generates the problem of identifying basic qualifications in training for members of the profession. SIOP has adopted Guidelines for Education and Training at the Doctoral Level in Industrial and Organizational Psychology (SIOP, 1985). The Guidelines are specified relative to competencies rather than specific course work, reflecting the diverse paths by which I-O psychologists come into the field. Not every qualified I-O psychologist possesses every competency. Below are listed the competencies that may be considered in advising licensing boards and others as to the areas that are relevant for I-O psychology. The competency categories are based on the Guidelines.

#### **Basic Fields of Psychology (All are required)**

1. Biological Bases of Behavior: e.g., Physiological, Comparative, Neuropsychology, Sensation and Perception, Psychopharmacology
2. Cognitive-Affective Bases of Behavior: Learning, Thinking, Motivation, Emotion
3. Social Bases of Behavior: Social, Group Process, Organizational and System Theory
4. Individual Differences: Cognitive Ability, Personality, Human Development, Abnormal Psychology
5. History and Systems: How the discipline of psychology developed and changed into its present configuration
6. Ethical, Legal, and Professional Issues:

#### **Research Fields (All are required)**

1. Research Methods: Methods, procedures, and techniques useful in the conduct of empirical research of phenomena of interest to I-O psychology
2. Statistical Method/Data Analysis: Statistical methods used in the analysis of data generated by empirical research
3. Measurement of Individual Differences: A sound background in both classical and modern measurement theories

#### **Core I-O Fields (All are required)**

1. Work Motivation: Conditions within the individual and his or her environment that influence the direction, strength, and persistence of individual behaviors
2. Organizational Theory: An understanding of the complex nature of organizations
3. Understanding Jobs and Job Performance: Job analysis, criterion development, and performance appraisal (i.e., methods of measuring and evaluating individuals as they perform organizational tasks)
4. Individual Differences in Worksettings: Identification and measurement of job related knowledges, skills, abilities, and other personal characteristics
5. Evaluating Psychological Interventions: Conducting personnel selection research, assessing the effectiveness of training, and evaluating other interventions

**Additional I-O Fields (Not all required but expectation is that there is competency in some of these fields)**

1. Organizational Development
2. Attitudes
3. Career Development
4. Decision Theory
5. Human Performance/Human Factors
6. Consumer Behavior
7. Small Group Theory and Process
8. Criterion Theory and Development
9. Job and Task Analysis
10. Individual Assessment

The rationale for the list in each of the fields is as follows:

The basic fields of psychology are required for a fundamental orientation to our roots in psychology as a scientific field. The list is virtually identical to those found in the APA and ASPPB Model Acts and is consistent with most state and provincial licensing laws.

The research fields are required by the scientific approach we have adhered to in our training model. We are a scientist-practitioner field and our training must reflect these skills.

These core I-O fields reflect the basic beginnings for both the industrial and organizational areas. The list is not intended to be exhaustive but rather it embodies the major themes that have been present in the field of I-O psychology.

The additional fields of I-O psychology are a reflection of two trends. Some of the fields represent areas where I-O psychologists have made major contributions (e.g., human factors, career development, etc.), but they are not necessarily practiced very often by I-O psychologists. Other fields represent subsets of the core areas (e.g., criterion development, job and task analysis, etc.). We believe it is unreasonable to require an I-O psychologist to show competence in all of these fields, but the expectation is that individuals should be able to demonstrate competence in at least some fields.

The following recommendations are provided for how a candidate for licensure in the area of I-O psychology might demonstrate competence in the basic, research, core, and additional I-O fields:

1. Competencies can be demonstrated in a number of ways. Many will be demonstrated through formal course work as part of the doctoral program. Others may be acquired through a program of directed study under the guidance of an I-O psychologist in the course of, or subsequent to, the doctoral program. A full and detailed description of the program of directed study should be provided.
2. The applicant for licensure must have a doctoral degree in an institution of higher learning with these characteristics:
  - a. The institution awarding the doctoral degree must be accredited by one of the regional accrediting associations or be a recognized candidate for accreditation within three years of the time the degree was conferred.
  - b. The doctoral degree must be awarded by a program in which the psychological content is clearly identified as such in official catalogues, written statements by chief administrative officers of the institution, or other descriptive materials. While the program may be located in a unit other than a traditional psychology department (e.g., a college of education or business) and it may have a different official designation (e.g., educational systems or organizational behavior), the psychological nature of its course offerings must be obvious from their titles, course descriptions, or other information (e.g., syllabi, lists of readings, etc.). The most obvious non-psychology department example is the considerable number of business school programs directed by I-O psychologists and possessing curricula substantially similar to those in psychology departments.
  - c. The doctoral program in psychology, organizational behavior, management, etc., must be an integrated, organized program as opposed to an accumulation of credits or courses.
3. The applicant should have had supervised experience. The purpose of supervised experience is to help guide the psychologist in ethical practice, in professional conduct with or within client or employing organizations, and to appreciate the impact of situational factors on interventions. These form the foundation for the recommended supervised experience guidelines:
  - a. An applicant will document that during the supervised work experience he/she has acquired the competencies to practice applied psychology in a professional, responsible, and ethical manner. Among the competencies which must be demonstrated are knowledge of and application of the following areas as they related to the person's field of expertise:
    - Ethical principles and professional guidelines,
    - Relevant state/provincial and federal laws, administrative orders, and legal procedures, and
    - The organizational context in which I-O psychologists work.
  - b. Supervised experience in the practice of psychology must include:
    - A written statement of goals of the supervised work experience and specification of the nature of the experiences,
    - Time spent in professional psychological activities with or on behalf of a client,
    - Supervision provided by a qualified psychologist who is responsible for the program. The supervising psychologist need not necessarily have the status of organizational supervisor, provided all relationships are made explicit.

- Professional activities conducted in a setting where a supervisor is available for consultation within a reasonable time (whether or not the supervisor is an employee of the organization),
- Supervision of work experience will include reviewing and commenting on any research or intervention designs, monitoring progress on such efforts, and reviewing and commenting on any reports, and
- Documentation of the supervised work experience in the form of a log, diary, or contemporaneously recorded notes or observations.
- Finally, SIOP recognizes and would like to encourage diversity and innovation in approaches to training I-O psychologists.

*\*Minor wording modifications to this statement, made to reflect the current state of I-O licensure requirements in the states, were approved by the SIOP Executive Board in September 2019.*