

**RULES  
OF  
THE BOARD OF EXAMINERS IN PSYCHOLOGY**

**CHAPTER 1180-04  
RULES GOVERNING CERTIFIED PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSISTANTS**

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

|             |                                  |             |                              |
|-------------|----------------------------------|-------------|------------------------------|
| 1180-04-.01 | Scope of Practice                | 1180-04-.03 | Procedures for Certification |
| 1180-04-.02 | Qualifications for Certification |             |                              |

**1180-04-.01 SCOPE OF PRACTICE.**

- (1) The scope of practice of a Certified Psychological Assistant is prescribed and limited by Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 63, Chapter 11 and the rules set forth in this chapter and chapter 1180-01.
- (2) A certificate issued by the Board specifies certification as a Certified Psychological Assistant.
- (3) Certified Psychological Assistants shall limit their practices to the use of those techniques, and to providing services to those populations, for which they have formal education, formal professional training and supervised experience, and for which they hold certification. Because no education, professional training, supervised experience and practicum in psychotherapy or other therapeutic intervention activities is prescribed in the statute, the scope of practice for Certified Psychological Assistants is specifically restricted to psychological assessment, psychological testing, and related activities, with no Certified Psychological Assistant allowed to engage in psychotherapy or any other form of therapeutic intervention. The supervised practice of a Certified Psychological Assistant, may include, but is not limited to:
  - (a) Participates in psychological evaluations and clinical assessments of patients/clients utilizing a wide variety of assessment techniques and instruments thereby providing psychological data;
  - (b) Administers psychological testing, monitors mental status of patients and participates in treatment teams which evaluate, develop, implement, and document patient's treatment progress;
  - (c) Assists with classification information on patients and recommendations on service needs, identification and recommendation of services for the handicapped, and crisis intervention;
  - (d) Screens patients for appropriate treatments;
  - (e) Provides educational/information services for patients;
  - (f) Participates in both basic and applied research endeavors and contributes to the basic fund of psychological knowledge;
  - (g) May assist in psychological screening of employees; and
  - (h) May supervise/direct the work of clerical/related staff in the performance of their duties as assigned.

(Rule 1180-04-.01, continued)

- (4) Certified Psychological Assistants, who have had appropriate education, training and supervised practice experience, may render to individuals or to the public for remuneration any service involving the application of recognized principles, methods, and procedures of the science and profession of psychology as defined in paragraph three (3) above and only under the direct employment and qualified supervision of a Psychologist with HSP designation or a Senior Psychological Examiner; or the employment of a community mental health center or state governmental agency and the qualified supervision of a Psychologist with HSP designation or a Senior Psychological Examiner.
- (a) Supervision must meet minimum standards and a supervisor of record must be made known to the Board. Supervision conducted via face-to-face video conferencing equipment and/or technology is acceptable, assuming compliance with subparagraphs (4)(a) through (4)(g) of this rule. "Face-to-face" means (a) can see one's face and (b) occurring in real time via video conferencing equipment and/or technology. No more than seventy-five (75) percent of supervision can be obtained through video conferencing.
1. Before supervision of Certified Psychological Assistants may occur, a Board-supplied form shall be submitted to the Board's administrative office. Such form shall be signed by both the supervisor and the supervisee, and shall list
    - (i) Those Certified Psychological Assistants whom the Psychologist or Senior Psychological Examiner supervises and for whom he or she is the supervisor of record; or
    - (ii) A Certified Psychological Assistant must list his/her primary supervisor(s) if engaging in activities requiring supervision.
  2. The Board-supplied form may be obtained by contacting the Board's administrative office, or by downloading it from the Board's web page on the Internet.
- (b) Qualified supervision requires that a licensed Psychologist or Senior Psychological Examiner, qualified by experience and training to practice the overall supervised activity or activities, provide supervision on a regular and frequent basis. The supervising Psychologist for Certified Psychological Assistants delivering health services must also be designated as a HSP.
- (c) The supervising psychologist or Senior Psychological Examiner shall limit the number of supervisees in order to assure an adequate ratio of supervision hours to practice hours consistent with professional standards and guidelines which insure the welfare of the supervisees and their clients.
- (d) The supervising psychologist shall limit his/her supervision of Certified Psychological Assistants to psychological assessment activities. The supervising psychologist should not supervise the Certified Psychological Assistant for psychotherapy or other forms of intervention.
- (e) Specific case monitoring and skill training requires significant supervisory contact and must be in addition to overall administrative supervision.
1. Supervision is to be conducted primarily on a one-on-one basis and shall be in addition to any group seminar or group consultations which are also deemed appropriate. Thus, supervision will require considerable one-on-one contact and time with respect to each client. Records of the supervision process must be maintained by the supervisor covering the number of hours of supervision

(Rule 1180-04-.01, continued)

- activities, the number and duration of one-on-one supervisory meetings and documentation of clients discussed at each supervisory session.
2. A supervisor, at the time of supervision, must not be in a dual relationship with the supervisee, e.g., be a spouse, other close relative or therapist.
- (f) The supervising Psychologist or Senior Psychological Examiner has responsibility to require that the Certified Psychological Assistant complete continuing education to maintain continued competence.
  - (g) In all cases the specific terms of the supervisory arrangement are the responsibility of the supervising Psychologist or Senior Psychological Examiner upon whom it is incumbent to assure supervisory time and service delivery. Likewise, it is the responsibility of the supervisee to obtain supervision. The supervisor must consider the education, training, experience, ongoing performance and level of licensure of the supervisee. The arrangements for supervision must be agreed to by both the supervisor and the supervisee. The supervising Psychologist or Senior Psychological Examiner of record must protect the welfare of the client and assure compliance with Tennessee law and professional ethics. (Requirements for Psychologists receiving supervision as part of the experience requirement for designation as a HSP are contained in Rule 1180-02-.02(2)(d).)
- (5) The Board shall consider that an individual, either certified or uncertified, is violating these limits of practice if his/her conduct includes, but is not limited to, the following:
- (a) Claiming expertise or using techniques or procedures of assessment or treatment for which the practitioner has not completed appropriate academic course work or supervised training experience;
  - (b) Knowingly assigning, permitting or hiring any unqualified person(s) to perform functions of assessment or treatment or delegating the provisions of psychological services to unqualified person(s);
  - (c) Aiding, abetting, assisting, or hiring any individual to violate or circumvent any law or duly promulgated rule intended to guide the conduct of psychological services; or
  - (d) Providing or claiming to provide the services listed in paragraph (4) without supervision by a Psychologist with HSP designation or Senior Psychological Examiner.

**Authority:** T.C.A. §§ 4-5-202, 4-5-204, 63-11-104, and 63-11-201 through 63-11-208. **Administrative History:** Original rule filed November 22, 1978; effective January 8, 1979. Repeal and new rule filed June 18, 2002; effective September 1, 2002. Amendments filed April 4, 2014; effective July 3, 2014. Emergency rules filed October 3, 2025; effective through April 1, 2026. Emergency rules expired effective April 2, 2026, and the rules reverted to their previous statuses.

**1180-04-.02 QUALIFICATIONS FOR CERTIFICATION.** In evaluating the academic program and training of an applicant for certification as a Certified Psychological Assistant, the Board shall use the following criteria:

- (1) Educational requirements as a Certified Psychological Assistant must be met programmatically, i.e., as a matriculated in-residence student in a formal graduate training program organized to provide graduate education and training in psychology, and whose stated purpose and design is to educate and train Psychologists, Senior Psychological Examiners, Psychological Examiners, and/or Certified Psychological Assistants.

(Rule 1180-04-.02, continued)

- (2) The degree-granting institution for applicants for certification as a Certified Psychological Assistant must be regionally accredited at the time of the applicant's graduation. Regional accreditation is defined as accreditation by one of the six regional agencies of the Council on Post Secondary Accreditation or the evaluations and decisions regarding foreign education and credentials by the World Education Service.
- (3) A minimum of one (1) academic year of graduate training in psychology, including a master's degree from an accredited institution of higher education, as defined above, is required. Such a degree should be based on a minimum of thirty-three (33) graduate semester hours exclusive of credit awarded for practicum and field experience, however titled. In lieu of a master's degree, an applicant who has successfully completed a minimum of thirty-three (33) graduate semester hours in residence as a matriculated student in a doctoral program in psychology as defined in rule 1180-2-.02(1) may be considered for certification.
- (4) The academic program shall include specialized training in psychological assessment, test construction and measurement, the administration and interpretation of psychological skills, and social history methods.
  - (a) Successfully completing a three (3) graduate semester hours course on professional standards and ethics based on the Code of Ethics of the APA, and a three (3) graduate semester hours course in Abnormal Psychology or Psychopathology is required.
  - (b) In addition to the two (2) required courses mentioned above, a minimum of nine (9) graduate semester hours must be in the basic substantive areas of psychology and at least three (3) substantive areas must be represented.

The basic substantive areas of psychology include, but are not restricted to, experimental, developmental, individual differences, social psychology, cultural/ethnic, sex roles, statistics, history and systems, research and experimental design, personality theory, learning, physiological, comparative, motivation, emotion, sensation and perception, cognitive and organizational.
  - (c) In addition to and not included in the above substantive courses, a minimum of nine (9) semester hours must be related to the application of psychology, including formal psychological testing and intervention techniques. These nine (9) hours must include at least three (3) graduate semester hours in cognitive/intellectual testing and three (3) graduate semester hours in formal personality testing.
  - (d) The remaining nine (9) of the required thirty-three (33) hours may be either substantive course work, applied course work or thesis hours.
  - (e) A course shall count only one (1) time to meet only one (1) requirement.
- (5) Applicants for certification as a Certified Psychological Assistant are required to complete at least one (1) on-site, formal, supervised practicum in psychological assessment for a minimum of three (3) semester hours of graduate credit. The semester hour credit for a supervised practicum must be in addition to the required minimum of thirty-three (33) total graduate semester hours which are specified above.
- (6) Equivalent training and experience.
  - (a) In cases in which the successfully completed formal master's degree program in psychology does not meet the minimum required semester hours for certification as a Certified Psychological Assistant, the Board may, at its discretion, accept additional course work subsequently completed programmatically in a qualifying psychology

(Rule 1180-04-.02, continued)

- graduate training program which meets the criteria outlined in subparagraph (4)(d) above.
- (b) The Board shall exercise discretion in the allocation of courses to basic substantive areas of psychology versus courses in the application of psychology.
  - (c) An individual who has received a Masters Degree in psychology and is a student in good standing in a doctoral degree from an APA approved or CNRHSP/ASPPB designated training program in professional psychology, shall be deemed to have completed the academic course requirements for certification as a Certified Psychological Assistant.
  - (d) Any request for a declaration of equivalency of programs completed or of course work taken outside of departments of psychology, to programs or to course work completed in departments of psychology, shall be determined by the psychological content of the courses taken irrespective of title. When an applicant's degree/course work is from another field (e.g., education), the burden of proof of equivalency is on the applicant. Objective material such as course titles, catalog descriptions, course outlines, syllabi, assignment sheets, documentation from course instructors and program heads, and/or any interdepartmental handbooks in which programs and/or course work are described should be provided to document the request for consideration of equivalency. Educational and professional qualifications of the faculty shall also be considered. All educational requirements including practicum must be satisfied.
- (7) Practicum. Practicum experience is required for certification as a Certified Psychological Assistant. A practicum consists of a supervised training experience organized by a graduate academic psychology training program for the specific purpose of applied skill development appropriate to the areas of preparation. The Board makes no distinction between courses labeled masters or doctoral level practica or masters level internship; all are considered practica.
- (a) A practicum shall be considered valid for certification only if a minimum of eighteen (18) graduate semester hours of required course work have been completed prior to beginning the practicum experience. Nine (9) of these eighteen (18) graduate semester hours shall consist of three (3) graduate semester hours in Ethics based on the APA code, three (3) graduate semester hours in psychological assessment, and three (3) graduate semester hours in abnormal psychology or psychopathology.
  - (b) Practicum experience shall be distinct from work experience. Practicum experience shall be provided in settings providing a range of assessment and intervention activities conducted directly with clients seeking health services and is distinct from course-related laboratory experience.
  - (c) Completed practica must appear on the applicant's graduate transcript.
  - (d) The board shall require for certification as a Certified Psychological Assistant practicum training which shall consist of not less than three hundred (300) clock hours. Twenty-five percent (25%) of the required three hundred (300) clock hours (75 hours) must be spent in individual and group supervision.
  - (e) The practicum experience shall specifically include substantial training and supervision in formal psychological assessment, including clinical diagnostic interviews, and formal psychological testing.
  - (f) Adequate supervision for an acceptable practicum experience requires a minimum of one (1) hour per week of individual, face to face supervision by the on-site supervisor.

(Rule 1180-04-.02, continued)

The supervisor must be competent to practice the activity supervised and shall not be in a dual relationship with the supervisee. The supervision shall be for direct provision of client services. The remaining required supervisory hours may be met by group supervision and participation in case conferences and treatment team meetings and review of reports and notes by the supervisor.

- (g) The Board requires on-site supervision for the practicum experience. This means that an on-site supervisor is present whenever the graduate student is conducting assessment activities with clients at the practicum site. This supervision requirement is met in one (1) of three (3) ways:
1. The preferred method is for the on-site supervision of practicum experiences for trainees to be provided by a licensed Psychologist designated as a HSP.
  2. An alternate method is applicable when a licensed Psychologist with designation as a HSP is not available on-site. On-site supervision must be provided as follows:
    - (i) The graduate student may be supervised by a Senior Psychological Examiner, or a School Psychologist with at least three (3) years of continuous full-time employment in the school system; and
    - (ii) A licensed Psychologist with designation as a HSP must have overall responsibility for the student's practicum training. The licensed Psychologist with a designation of HSP shall meet with the student no less often than weekly during the duration of the practicum experience.
  3. APPIC listed predoctoral interns or post doctoral fellows may provide on-site practicum supervision if a Psychologist with HSP designation and who is a member of the training faculty has overall responsibility for the practicum student's training. This Psychologist must meet weekly with the APPIC intern or fellow about their practicum supervision. The HSP Psychologist must meet with the practicum student at least weekly in either group or individual supervision.
- (8) Individuals who have completed an APA approved or APPIC listed predoctoral internship and have completed all requirements for a doctoral degree from an APA approved or CNRHSP/ASPPB designated psychology training program except for the dissertation shall be deemed to have satisfied the practicum requirements for certification as a Certified Psychological Assistant.

**Authority:** T.C.A. §§ 4-5-202, 4-5-204, 63-11-104, 63-11-201, and 63-11-207. **Administrative History:** Original rule filed June 18, 2002; effective September 1, 2002.

**1180-04-.03 PROCEDURES FOR CERTIFICATION.** To become certified as a Certified Psychological Assistant in Tennessee, a person must comply with the following procedures and requirements:

- (1) An application packet shall be requested from the Board's administrative office or downloaded from the Department of Health's website.
- (2) An applicant shall respond truthfully and completely to every question or request for information contained in the application form. The completed application form and all fees required by the form and these rules shall be submitted to the Board's administrative office.
- (3) Applications will be accepted throughout the year.

(Rule 1180-04-.03, continued)

- (4) An applicant shall submit with the application two (2) signed passport type photographs taken within the preceding twelve (12) months.
- (5) An applicant shall submit with the application a certified copy or a notarized photocopy of his/her birth certificate.
- (6) It is the applicant's responsibility to request that the institution(s) of higher education submit the transcript(s) of all graduate course work directly to the Board office. The transcript(s) must show the highest degree(s) earned and must carry the official seal of that institution.
- (7) An applicant for certification as a Certified Psychological Assistant must submit completed worksheets for evaluation of graduate courses indicating the applicant's allocation of course credit to substantive psychology course work and to course work completed in psychological testing and measurement. The applicant must send copies of the course descriptions from the graduate catalog current at the time of his or her enrollment.
- (8) An applicant must submit evidence of good moral character and of not being engaged in unethical practice. Such evidence shall be a minimum of three (3) letters of recommendation in addition to the practicum documentation. It is the applicant's responsibility to request references from individuals who have personal knowledge of, and can attest to, the applicant's education, training and performance at the specific level of licensure for which the applicant is applying. All letters of recommendation must contain a statement specifying that certification as a Certified Psychological Assistant for the applicant is being recommended. All letters shall be current, original letters written specifically for the certification application and mailed directly to the Board by the person providing the information on the signator's letterhead. Such letters are valid for one (1) year from date of receipt. Additional inquiries may be initiated by the Board as it may require.
  - (a) One (1) of the required three (3) letters must be from a licensed Psychologist with HSP designation, or if the endorser is from another jurisdiction, HSP equivalent licensed Psychologist. The other letters may be from licensed Psychologists or licensed Senior Psychological Examiners.
  - (b) Letter(s) from the practicum supervisor(s) shall be submitted. The letter(s) shall provide specific information about the types of clients and range of services provided as well as the nature of the internship or practicum site. An overall evaluation of the quality of services provided by the trainee must be included.
  - (c) If the applicant has received a Masters Degree in psychology and is a student in good standing in a doctoral degree from an APA approved or CNRHSP/ASPPB designated training program in professional psychology, a letter of recommendation from the Director of Training of that doctoral degree program must be provided.
- (9) An applicant shall disclose the circumstances surrounding any of the following:
  - (a) Conviction of any criminal law violation of any country, state or municipality, except minor traffic violations.
  - (b) The denial of licensure or certification by any other state or the discipline of licensure or certification by any state.
  - (c) Loss or restriction of licensure or certification.
  - (d) Any civil suit judgment or civil suit settlement in which the applicant was a party defendant including, without limitation, actions involving malpractice, breach of

(Rule 1180-04-.03, continued)

contract, antitrust activity, or any other civil action remedy recognized under the country's or state's statutory, common or case law.

- (10) An applicant shall cause to be submitted to the Board's administrative office directly from the vendor identified in the Board's certification application materials, the result of a criminal background check.
- (11) If an applicant holds or has ever held a license or certificate to practice psychology in another state, regardless of the type or level of licensure or certification, the applicant shall cause to be submitted the equivalent of a Tennessee Certificate of Fitness (verification of license) from the authorizing regulatory agency which indicates the applicant holds or held an active license or certificate and whether it is in good standing presently or was at the time it became inactive.
- (12) When necessary, all required documents shall be translated into English and the translation and original document certified as to authenticity by the issuing source. Both versions must be submitted to the Board's administrative office.

**Authority:** T.C.A. §§ 4-5-202, 4-5-204, 63-11-104, 63-11-201, 63-11-206, and 63-11-207.  
**Administrative History:** Original rule filed June 18, 2002; effective September 1, 2002. Amendment filed October 18, 2004; effective January 1, 2005. Amendment filed March 17, 2006; effective May 31, 2006. Amendment filed July 27, 2006; effective October 10, 2006. Amendment filed April 4, 2014; effective July 3, 2014. Emergency rules filed October 3, 2025; effective through April 1, 2026. Emergency rules expired effective April 2, 2026, and the rules reverted to their previous statuses.