

# **THE WRITTEN EXAMINATION IN FORENSIC PSYCHOLOGY**

**AMERICAN BOARD OF FORENSIC PSYCHOLOGY, INC. (ABFP)**

**Following is a general outline of procedures and other considerations regarding the Written Examination in Forensic Psychology.<sup>1</sup>**

## **A. How the Written Examination Fits into the Specialist Process.**

Following the review and acceptance of the candidate's credentials by the American Board of Professional Psychology and the American Board of Forensic Psychology, the written examination is the next step. Upon successful completion of this examination, the candidate is invited to submit two Practice Samples that will serve as a partial basis for the Oral Examination, the final phase of the process.

The written examination serves to ensure that persons seeking certification in Forensic Psychology possess sufficient breadth of forensic knowledge.

## **B. Examination Scheduling and Time Limitations**

The fee for the written examination is \$200 and must be pre-paid to ABFP. The Candidate must take the written examination within 12 months of being accepted for candidacy. The ABFP Corresponding Secretary is responsible for scheduling the written examination and providing results to the Candidate and ABFP Board of Directors. The National Chair of Examinations is responsible for providing the written examination materials to the ABFP Specialist who will be administering the written examination and for scoring it.

In order to facilitate administration of the written examination, a number of ABFP Specialists have agreed to administer the examination in their professional offices. These examination sites are geographically distributed around the country so as to reduce travel costs. Candidates should contact the ABFP Corresponding Secretary to schedule an examination.

Each candidate has three chances to pass the written examination.

If a Candidate does not pass the written examination on the first try, a second attempt may be made no earlier than six months and no later than 18 months after the candidate was notified of the results of the first examination.

If a Candidate does not pass the written examination on the second attempt, a third attempt may be made no earlier than six months and no later than 18 months after the candidate was notified of the results of the second examination.

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<sup>1</sup> Revised June 2012

If the Candidate does not pass the written examination on the third attempt, candidacy is terminated. The psychologist is eligible to reapply for candidacy 12 months after the third examination has been failed.

Once passed, the written examination need only be taken again if the Candidate does not obtain the forensic diploma within four years of passing the written examination.

### **C. The Written Examination**

This “closed book” examination currently consists of 197 multiple choice items with a total of four answer choices per item. Please note that the format of the examination may be modified at any time. The number of items may vary slightly from 197, depending on recurring improvements to the examination.

The Candidate is allowed 3.5 hours to complete the examination, which may be administered individually or in a group setting.

The current examination has questions distributed among the 197 items in the following categories. Many questions cover more than one category.

- (1) Ethics, Guidelines, and Professional Issues
- (2) Law, Precedents, Court Rules, Civil and Criminal Procedures, and Judicial Practices
- (3) Testing and Assessment, Examination Issues, and Application of Scientific Knowledge to Legal Procedure (e.g., eyewitness accuracy, reliability of memory, jury behavior, and factors influencing confession)
- (4) Civil Competence, Individual Rights and Liberties, Workplace Discrimination, and Employment Rights
- (5) Juvenile, Parenting, and Family/Domestic/Matrimonial Matters
- (6) Civil Damages, Personal Injury, Disability, and Workers Compensation
- (7) Criminal Competence and Criminal Responsibility

### **D. Passing the Written Examination**

To pass the written examination, a candidate must:

- (1) have an overall percentage correct of at least 70 percent, AND
- (2) correctly answer at least 60 percent of the questions within every category, AND
- (3) correctly answer at least 70 percent of the questions within 6 of the 7 categories.

These criteria ensure breadth of candidate knowledge in forensic psychology, which is the intent of the written examination.

Preparation for the written examination may be facilitated by study of the materials referenced in ABFP's *Suggested Reading List for Written and Oral Examinations*, which may be found at <http://www.abfp.com>.