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CAPIC MHSA Stipend Program: Supervised Professional Experience (SPE) Issues

To become a licensed psychologist in the state of California, an individual must have sufficient Supervised Professional Experience (SPE) hours, which happens at both the predoc and postdoc level. For students at those CAPIC-member programs, which are also “qualified” sites for MHSA purposes (i.e. they receive county MH funding), having your SPE hours count towards licensure is relatively simple and straightforward.

That is because a postdoc serving his/her stipend payback in a postdoc training program accredited by APA or that is a postdoc member of CAPIC or APPIC, may count all his/her direct service hours toward licensure *without having to be registered with the California Board of Psychology (BoP)*. These organizations (CAPIC, APA, APPIC) are all recognized by the BoP to meet its SPE standards.

Your postdoc site may or may not be a CAPIC member. Some CAPIC members do not receive county MH funding, or simply do not have postdoc positions, so therefore are not qualified sites. Conversely, a non-CAPIC member site may receive county MH funds, and therefore may serve as a CAPIC MHSA stipend qualified postdoc site.

Postdoc SPE hours served at a qualifying site that is not a CAPIC, APA or APPIC member may still count towards licensure. However, the postdoc must first be registered with the California Board of Psychology as a “Psych Assistant”* and work under the supervision of a licensed psychologist in order to have those training hours count toward licensure. The postdoc will also need to complete the application for this status, sign the forms along with the supervising psychologist, and send the forms to the BoP. The Board will review the paperwork and then issue an approval of the arrangement. No hours will count toward licensure before the Board approves the Psych Assistant* status.

**If you already have a doctorate degree with 1,500 hours of experience and plan to work for a non-profit community agency which receives 25% or more of its funding from governmental sources (not counting Medi-Cal or Medicare), you must register for employment as a registered psychologist under Section 2909(d) of the Business and Professions Code.*

- Note: While the BoP looks at the actual total SPE hours earned towards licensure, for CAPIC MHSA purposes, a Full-Time position (predoc or postdoc) is 35 to 40 hours/week. A Half-Time position is 20 to 24 hours/week.

A separate issue arises when a “qualified” stipend postdoc site may lack a licensed supervisor, or more often, a licensed practitioner with sufficient time to supervise postdocs. The State of California grants exceptions to some mental health agencies, allowing a postdoc psychologist assistant to serve there without licensed supervision. However, this exception is separate from a postdoc’s SPE requirements, and any such unsupervised hours will NOT count towards licensure, since they are by definition not SPE.

- The ideal solution is for the postdoc to find a qualified site which has licensed supervision.
- If only qualified sites without supervision are available, this will meet the CAPIC MHSA stipend requirements. However, the postdoc should make further plans to earn the needed SPE hours (e.g. additional postdoc service at a *supervised* site after completing the CAPIC MHSA stipend payback service).

Relevant CA State Board of Psychology web pages references:

- Main Page: <http://www.psychboard.ca.gov/>
- Overview of Licensure Process: <http://www.psychboard.ca.gov/applicants/license.shtml>
- Licensing Frequently Asked Questions: <http://www.psychboard.ca.gov/faq.shtml>
- Supervision at a Glance: <http://www.psychboard.ca.gov/applicants/quickref-laws.pdf>
- Supervised Professional Experience Rules: <http://www.psychboard.ca.gov/lawsregs/psp.shtml>
- Supervision Best Practices: <http://www.psychboard.ca.gov/applicants/supervision-best.shtml>
- Psych Assistant forms: <http://www.psychboard.ca.gov/applicants/quickref-laws.pdf>

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