Perspectives On The Master’s Issue

Chair: Katherine Nordal, PhD, Executive Director for Professional Practice

Presenters: Jim Diaz-Granados, PhD, Executive Director, APA Education
Deborah Baker, JD, Director of Legal & Regulatory Policy, APA Practice

Discussants: Elena Eisman, PhD, Associate Executive Director, APA Practice Governance Operations, Director of the APA Center for Psychology & Health
Catherine Grus, PhD, Deputy Director, APA Education
Council of Representatives Meeting -- August 2017

Council agreed that current issues and developments have risen to the level that APA should consider options related to master’s level training and/or practice and that staff and governance should identify and explore options for APA to consider.
GUIDING PRINCIPLES

• The doctorate is the minimum educational requirement for entry into professional practice as a psychologist.

• Any policy should consider and be in the best interest of the entire discipline and profession.

• Any policy must reinforce the mission of APA to promote the discipline of psychology to benefit society and improve peoples’ lives.
APA Staff Workgroup

• Compile relevant data regarding master’s issues in psychology for Council
  • Education/training issues
  • Professional practice issues
• Explain pros/cons for each of the available options
• Deliver information including input from key stakeholders to Council for consideration

• Identified stakeholder communities relevant to the training and practice issues
• Engaged in conference calls to collect relevant information & concerns
• Hosted webinars for selected stakeholders & subject matter experts as well as Council to solicit feedback on identified options
Webinars, calls, & conversations with ...

Divisions: 3, 12, 13, 14, 16, 17, 18, 19, 22, 29, 31, 38, 39, 40, 42, 43, 45, 55

SPTAs: Alabama, Alaska, Arkansas, California, Connecticut, Delaware, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Nebraska, New Mexico, North Carolina, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Vermont, Washington, West Virginia, Wyoming

2018 Council, DPAs, ASPPB, MPCAC, CMCTP, COGDOP, CCPTP, CCTC, ACPRO, CAPP, BEA, EMPA Delegates
Education & Training

Relevant Background Information for Master’s Issue Discussion
Psychology Master's Degrees Awarded, 2006 and 2016

Source: Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System, National Center for Education Statistics.
Percentage of Psychology Master’s Degrees Awarded by Subfield, 2016

**Research Subfields**
- Psychology, General: 55%
- Industrial/Organizational Psychology: 10%
- Educational Psychology: 10%
- Developmental Psychology: 3%
- Experimental Psychology: 2%
- Community Psychology: 2%
- Other Research Fields: 18%

**Health Service Psychology Subfields**
- Counseling Psychology: 58%
- Clinical Psychology: 17%
- School Psychology: 12%
- Forensic Psychology: 5%
- Other HSP Fields: 8%

Source: Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System, National Center for Education Statistics.
APA & Accreditation

• APA accredits doctoral programs, internship programs, and postdoctoral residencies in health service psychology.

• APA does not accredit master’s programs currently.

• APA Council of Representatives approved the following motion on Friday morning:
  • That Council supports pursuing accreditation of master’s level programs in areas where APA already accredits.
Accrediting Bodies at the Master’s Level

1. MPCAC (Master’s in Psychology and Counseling Accreditation Council)
   • Originally MPAC (Master’s in Psychology Accreditation Council)
     • Counseling accreditation arm added in 2009
   • 46 accredited programs
     • 27 psychology programs (counseling psychology included) and 19 counseling programs

2. CACREP (Council on Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs)
   • 843 accredited programs in 15 different areas of counseling (767 master’s, 76 doctoral)
     • No psychology programs
CURRENT ISSUES

• Limiting practice to the doctoral degree has provided opportunities for other related areas and significant implications for psychology
• Restrictions on access to licensure for graduates of psychology master’s programs
• Psychology faculty are ineligible as core faculty in CACREP Counseling programs
IMPLICATIONS

• Viability of Master’s and Doctoral programs at stake
• Graduates from psychology master’s programs will not have a path toward licensure.
• Decrease in access to psychological services for those in need.
Major Topics of Discussion

• Accreditation of Master’s Programs
  ▪ Impact on Doctoral Programs
  ▪ Differentiation of Standards
  ▪ Implementation Considerations

• Regulation and Licensure
  ▪ Title
  ▪ Scope of Practice
  ▪ Level of Supervision of Master’s Level Practitioners
  ▪ Marketplace Considerations
January 2017 Council webinars

Survey results & key considerations
APA should consider options for the practice of psychology at the master’s level.
Supporting master’s training & practice in health service psychology is consistent with APA’s mission to promote the discipline of psychology to benefit society & to improve people’s lives.
Key Considerations in Accreditation

1. Differentiation of standards
2. Impact on doctoral level training
3. Implementation considerations
1. DIFFERENTIATION OF STANDARDS

• It is imperative that doctoral and master’s level standards of accreditation be clearly defined and differentiated.

• Value add of doctoral degree

• Completion of Psychology Pipeline
Accreditation standards & competencies for master’s level training should be clearly differentiated from standards & competencies for doctoral training.
Actions by APA to define standards of training & practice at the master’s level would be beneficial to the discipline of psychology.
2. IMPACT ON DOCTORAL LEVEL TRAINING

Viability of master’s psychology programs is important to the viability of doctoral programs.

- Financial resources
- Faculty lines
APA should be concerned with the viability of a career path for students in health service psychology master’s programs.
3. IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS

• Timeframe to establish the decision-making structure of the accrediting body and how that body will need to be developed in accordance with current APA policies;
• Scope of accreditation for that body;
• Timeframe to develop standards, policies, and procedures for program review;
• Timeframe to seek recognition (federal and non-federal);
• Infrastructure issues
APA should pursue options for accreditation of master’s programs in health service psychology (clinical, counseling & school)
Regulation and Licensure

Relevant Background Information for Master’s Issue Discussion
Key Considerations in Regulation & Licensure

1. Title
2. Scope of practice
3. Supervised vs. independent practice
4. Marketplace Issues
# The State of the States on Psychology Licensure

**States (+ D.C.) with Doctoral Licensure: 34**

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**Bolded states below are those that have MA-level licensure for independent practice: Kansas, Kentucky, Oregon, Texas, Vermont & West Virginia**

**States with Doctoral Licensure & MA Licensure—Independent practice: 3**

| Texas | Licensed Psychological Associate [3000 hours of supervised experience required] – rule change effective November 2017 |
| Vermont | Psychologist-Masters (no delay before independent practice) |
| West Virginia | Psychologist (5 years of experience before independent practice) |

**States with Doctoral licensure & two levels of MA level licensure/practice (potential for independent practice): 3**

| Kansas | Licensed Clinical Psychotherapist (independent)  |
| Kentucky | Licensed Psychological Practitioner (Independent) |
| Oregon | Psychologist Associate (Independent) |

**States with Doctoral licensure & supervised MA level registered professional: 4**

| California | Registered Psychological Assistant |
| Maryland | Psychological Associate |
| Nebraska | Registered Psychological Assistant or Psychological Associate |
| Wyoming | Certified Psychological Practitioner (after 5 years, supervision drops to weekly consultation with 1 hour/face-to-face per month) |

**States with Doctoral Licensure & MA licensure—supervised practice: 7**

| Alaska* | Licensed Psychological Associate [In 1998, independent scope of practice was repealed. As of 2015, the board was allowing for independent practice as verified with ASPB.] |
| Alabama | Psychological Technician |
| Maine | Psychological Examiner |
| Michigan | Limited Licensed Psychologist |
| New Mexico | Psychologist Associate |
| North Carolina | Licensed Psychological Associate |
| Tennessee* | Psychological Examiner |
| Certified Psychological Assistant | |

* indicates states that used to have MA level licensure for independent practice but no longer have that license. For example, as of December 2013, Arkansas no longer issues the psychological examiner license which had independent practice rights.
CURRENT STATE OF THE STATES

• APA Model Act for State Licensure
  • The Act recognizes the doctorate as the minimum educational requirement for entry into professional practice as a psychologist.

• Since 1999, 10 states have eliminated master’s level licensure for independent or supervised psychological practice
  • Arkansas, Delaware, Iowa, Minnesota, Nebraska, New Hampshire, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania & South Carolina

• 34 jurisdictions only recognize doctorate for psychology licensure

• Currently, 17 jurisdictions recognize master’s level psychology practice whether supervised or (eventual) independent practice
1. TITLE

• Title is not negotiable.

• The APA Model Licensing Act recognizes the doctorate as the minimum educational requirement for entry into professional practice as a “psychologist.”

• Need for consistent titling across states
The title “psychologist” should be limited to doctoral-level practitioners only

- Strongly agree: 64%
- Agree: 12%
- Neutral: 9%
- Strongly disagree: 9%
- Disagree: 4%
- Not enough information: 2%
2. SCOPE OF PRACTICE

- Define & differentiate master’s versus doctoral level competencies as competencies should determine scope
- Need consistent definition of scope across state licensing statutes
- Define appropriate vocational activities/functions of master’s trained individuals
- Protection of practice scope for doctoral level psychologists—defend against scope creep
The scope of work for master’s level practitioners should be clearly differentiated from a doctoral scope of practice.
3. SUPERVISED VS. INDEPENDENT PRACTICE

- Independent for some functions (psychotherapy) & supervised for others (psychological testing)
- Supervised for all functions, either permanently or time-limited
- Independent practice for all functions:
  - Why would a graduate want a license requiring supervision when a license for independent practice may be available as a counselor, marriage and family therapist, or social worker?
APA should support licensure.
4. MARKETPLACE ISSUES: CONCERNS

• Master’s trained individuals will want independent practice and be in “competition” with psychologists

• Master’s level licensing will undermine reimbursement & practice revenues

• Recognition of psychology as a doctoral level profession will be diminished

• Master’s level licensing may adversely impact the role of professional psychology in health care...”physician definition” in Medicare; prescriptive authority
APA will lower the standard of practice by supporting the practice of psychology at the master’s level.
APA will lessen the demand for doctoral level practitioners by supporting master’s level practice in psychology.
Psychologist Demand Projections, 2015-2030

- Baseline
- Geographic Equivalence
- Racial/Ethnic Equivalence
- Address Unmet Need
- Effect of Affordable Care Act

Source: American Psychological Association, IHS Markit.
4. MARKETPLACE ISSUES: BENEFITS

• Psychology will produce better trained master’s level practitioners than those coming from other behavioral health areas
• Potential to increase access to quality behavioral health care
• Well-defined master’s training and scope will elevate the status of the doctoral degree
• Increased opportunities for students from diverse backgrounds to enter psychology
The practice of psychology at the master’s level will increase access for those in need of psychological services.
Thank you -- Questions?