

Diplomate in Police Psychology

Established in 1989, the Diplomate in Police Psychology is certification by the Society for Police and Criminal Psychology (SPCP) that a member has achieved a high level of knowledge, skills, and competence and is a leader in the field of applied Police Psychology. Through the Diplomate, the Society has long recognized competence among psychologists in many sub-disciplines, including industrial/organizational psychologists and academic psychologists, as well as licensed clinical psychologists. Diplomate status is peer recognition that the individual has achieved a level of knowledge, skills, and competence that exceeds the attainment of a terminal degree. It requires additional study and years of professional experience. The holder of the Diplomate is a capable and accomplished professional in the field of Police Psychology, to whom others can look for leadership and advice.

Application, Evaluation, Maintenance, and Appeal Processes

Attaining the Diplomate requires candidates to undergo a thorough application review and evaluation process conducted by a panel of active Diplomates.

Application and Documentation Review

Applicants must submit the following in their Diplomate application package to:

Scott Stubenrauch
Diplomate Chair
swspsych@gmail.com

- 1. Completed application form with signed and notarized attestation form.**
- 2. Updated copy of vita/resume**
- 3. Copy of graduate transcripts and diploma**
 - In the United States (U.S.) and Canada, a doctoral degree (e.g. Ph.D., Psy.D., Ed.D.) from a regionally accredited college or university recognized by the U.S. Department of Education or one of the provincial higher education systems in Canada is required.
 - International applicants are reviewed on a case-by-case basis with consideration of the specific country's standards of education and professional practice; however, a copy of academic transcripts and diploma must be provided and must demonstrate at least an equivalent level of academic rigor to the U.S. Individuals who are considering applying from outside of the U.S. or Canada are encouraged to consult with the Diplomate Chair prior to completing the application and paying the application fee to ensure sufficiency of the educational requirements.
- 4. Evidence of at least five ongoing years of Police Psychology-specific postgraduate work experience.** Although acceptable, it is not a requirement that such experience be obtained through direct employment by a police agency. For example, experience obtained through the provision of clinical, consulting, or research services provided to police agencies or police officers serving as a client or patient can count toward this experience. Although an individual's professional workload does not have to be exclusively concentrated on the provision of Police Psychology services, a substantial amount of experience is required. For example, having one

police officer on a clinical case load over a five-year span would not constitute a robust enough amount of experience. *Note: Experience as a law enforcement officer will not count toward this requirement.*

5. **Evidence of having attained at least 60 hours of professional continuing education credits relevant to Police Psychology** (e.g. an average of 12 credits each year over a five-year span).
6. **Proof of state or jurisdictional licensure in “good standing” -OR OTHERWISE- proof of “good standing” employment in an exempt setting** (e.g., governmental organization or academic institution) for a period of at least five years.
 - International applicants are reviewed on a case-by-case basis with consideration of the specific country's standards of professional practice. Proof of credentials appropriate to the jurisdiction must be provided and must demonstrate at least an equivalent level of standards to the U.S. Individuals who are considering applying from outside of the U.S. are encouraged to consult with the Diplomate Chair prior to completing the application and paying the application fee to ensure sufficiency of this requirement.
7. **Three professional reference letters from a law enforcement/criminal justice professional** with a documented history of involvement in law enforcement, who can attest to the applicant’s professional experience.
8. **Membership, in good standing, in the Society for Police and Criminal Psychology for a minimum of three years.**
9. **\$400 application fee (non-refundable), payable at the time of application submission.** Payments should be made online through the SPCP portal **-OR-** checks can be made out to **The Society for Police and Criminal Psychology** and mailed to:

JoAnne Brewster
MSC 7704, Miller 1151
91 E. Grace St.
James Madison University
Harrisonburg, VA 22807

******Applications and payments should be made prior to June 30th of each calendar year to reserve enough time for the application review and for the coordination of the full examination process to occur during that year's conference. For any application and payment received after June 30th, there is no guarantee that those individuals would be able to sit for the written and oral exams until the following year's conference.***

Examination Process

Individuals whose application materials are approved by the Diplomate Committee will then be considered Diplomate Candidates and will enter the evaluation process at that time. Upon being notified of their progression, they will:

1. Submit an appropriate **work sample consistent with the core type of work performed** (i.e., assessment, treatment, operations, or consultation, or research in any of those domains), along with the **accompanying informed consent form (if applicable) that was used in relation to the actual work performed.**

Diplomate Work Sample Requirements:

- As part of the work sample submission, please provide a one-page summary describing the background for which the service related to the work sample was delivered, as well as copies of any ancillary documents or information that may be helpful to better

understand the context related to the service provided (e.g., personality or psychological test reports). The Diplomate Committee reserves the right to request any additional information or documentation when such information is necessary to sufficiently evaluate the totality of the work sample.

- Any handwritten notes that may be included in the submission must be fully legible, or if not, then transcribed versions along with the original handwritten versions must be provided.
- Any reports or documents must be submitted in either Acrobat PDF or Microsoft WORD format and should be free of any typos and grammatical or formatting errors.
- Any and all of the client or patient's personally identifiable information must be redacted. This means that where necessary, reports and/or notes should be edited and actual identifying information should be replaced with fictitious information.
- In cases where an audio or video recording of confidential information is submitted as the work sample, video editing techniques should be used to protect the client or patient's anonymity (e.g., blurring of their facial image). Additionally, the Diplomate Candidate is required to fully and properly inform the client or patient and obtain their authorization to use the work sample recording. As part of this informed consent, the client or patient must understand that the recording will be used for the purposes of the Diplomate Examination, and that it may be transmitted and stored via electronic means by SPCP Diplomates involved in the Examination process.

******Professionalism is a core aspect evaluated throughout the entire Diplomate Examination Process and thus the Diplomate Committee reserves the right to disqualify any candidate on the grounds of failing to adhere to any one or more of the aforementioned instructions as applicable.***

2. The initial work sample submission and all ancillary materials will be reviewed thoroughly by three members of the Diplomate Committee, or when necessary, an appointed Diplomate(s) with specific expertise in a given area. The three evaluators will make up the candidate's Diplomate Review Panel. Feedback will be provided and the candidate will have an opportunity to address any comments and make any necessary edits before sending a final version for review by the same Diplomate Review Panel, barring any unforeseen circumstances that may render one of the original reviewers unavailable. This is considered the Revision Phase and candidates should expect thorough feedback in quality and quantity. Upon completion of the Revision Phase, a final work sample will be submitted and scored using a predetermined scoring rubric based on industry standards and best practices.

If the candidate successfully passes the work sample portion of the evaluation process, he or she will be scheduled to sit for the written and oral examinations at the next SPCP Conference.

3. The **written exam** is a multiple-choice formatted test that primarily covers content including laws and professional ethics applicable to Police Psychology and law enforcement practices and culture. A resource list from which the content of the written items was created will be provided to candidates in advance for their use in preparing for the written exam.
4. The **oral exam** will involve a semi-structured format and will be conducted by a panel of three Diplomate Members of the Society, which whenever viable, will include at least one of the Diplomate Committee Members who reviewed the candidate's work sample. Although topics of discussion will be centered around the candidate's primary area(s) of practice, topics may span

across the four core domains of Police Psychology (i.e., assessment, treatment, operations, and consultation).

Individuals who do not pass the process are welcome to reapply the following year if they feel prepared to do so. In such cases, a new application and fee must be submitted. There are no limitations on the number of times one may apply; however, after two consecutive “not passing” determinations (no matter the time in between), the candidate must wait a minimum of 36 months before they are eligible to reapply again. During this minimum 36-month time period, the individual is encouraged to focus on professional development and to bolster their experience in Police Psychology. Examinees who do not pass can request to be assigned a Diplomate Mentor who will provide feedback as to why they did not pass the examination and will help them to better understand area(s) of needed growth. In any such case, the Diplomate Mentor would not be a part of the candidate’s future evaluations.

The full evaluation process is designed to assess whether the candidate possesses a superior level of knowledge, skills, and competence in one or more areas of Police Psychology (i.e., assessment, treatment, operations, or consultation). To avoid any potential embarrassment associated with the possibility of not passing the process, applicants and candidates are strongly encouraged to not advertise that they are in the process of vying for the Diplomate. Additionally, applicants and candidates are not allowed to use their candidacy as a credential or to reference it in any form of professional context or business marketing messaging.

Maintenance Requirements

SPCP is committed to periodically reviewing whether all actively practicing Diplomates maintain their competence in Police Psychology, which justifies the purpose of having maintenance requirements. In order to maintain “active” Diplomate status, individuals must annually attest to the following:

1. That they have **remained free of any founded legal or ethical disciplinary actions levied against them**. Diplomates are expected to report to the Diplomate Committee any investigation of any complaint that is conducted on them, whether that complaint is justified or not.
2. That they have **attended at least one SPCP conference within each four-year period** (i.e., miss no more than three consecutive conferences) **-OR-** have been **actively involved with the Society in a formal and relevant capacity within the past four years** (e.g., actively serving on an SPCP committee).
3. That they have been **involved in professional development activities specific to Police Psychology**. Examples may include completion of a minimum of six Police Psychology-focused continuing education credits each year (which is equivalent to three credits every six months) or having made a substantial professional contribution to the field of Police Psychology each year (e.g., article publication or professional presentation specific to Police Psychology).

******SPCP and the Diplomate Committee reserves the right to request “active” Diplomates for formal documented proof of fulfillment of any of the above maintenance requirements should a question of legitimacy be suspected.***

Diplomates who are retired professionally and have remained in “good standing” throughout their careers continue to retain the Diplomate status “in perpetuity,” without needing to satisfy any additional continuing education or participation requirements. Such individuals will be referred to as “Legacy” Diplomates and for all intents and purposes, will be considered by SPCP and the Diplomate Committee to be “inactive” professionally in the field of Police Psychology. Diplomates who have left the Society, but may not have yet fully retired professionally, and have not been the subject of any

known criminal or ethical disciplinary actions, will also be considered “Legacy” Diplomates. In these circumstances, SPCP is unable to make any confirmation as to the Diplomat’s ongoing professional competence due to their inactivity within the Society.

******For individuals with a certified disability who are requesting special accommodations, such matters will be reviewed by the Diplomat Committee to ensure that implementation of the evaluation process is possible without sacrificing the integrity of the process or causing undue hardship to the candidate, the Diplomat Committee, the Diplomat Review Panel, or SPCP as a whole. This includes individuals requesting accommodation to the evaluation process and the maintenance process.***

Appeal Process

Any Diplomat candidate who did not successfully pass the Diplomat examination process may appeal the decision if they believe that the original determination was based on a procedural error. In such circumstances, a formal written appeal letter, clearly specifying the grounds on which the appeal is being made, should be submitted to SPCP’s Diplomat Chair within 30 calendar days of receiving notice that he or she did not pass. The Diplomat Chair will subsequently appoint an ad hoc Appeal Review Committee. The Appeal Review Committee may seek further information from the candidate or others as appropriate to the issue(s) raised. The original determination made by the assigned Diplomat Review Panel will be upheld unless the appellant is able to provide unequivocal evidence that the determination was made based on a valid procedural error and that there was no other bona fide reason that led to the original “not passing” determination. Additionally, it should not be inferred that a decision to overturn a “not passing” determination based on appeal means that the appellant retroactively passed; rather an alternative means of remedy determined to be appropriate by the Diplomat Committee may be implemented.

In circumstances where an individual has had his or her Diplomat rescinded (e.g., for legal or ethical issues), the individual may file an appeal. In such situations, a formal written letter of appeal should be submitted to SPCP’s Diplomat Chair. For individuals filing an appeal, the written letter must include a specific explanation of the reason(s) the individual believes that the rescinding of his or her Diplomat was made in error. The appeal will be reviewed by the Diplomat Committee, and if necessary, SPCP’s Board of Directors, to make a final determination. Further information may be requested from the appellant or others as appropriate to make an informed decision (e.g., State Psychology Board records, Court records). The original decision to rescind will be upheld unless compelling evidence is obtained to justify otherwise.

******In any of the aforementioned circumstances, if legal issues appear to be involved, SPCP may seek legal counsel and may share any information or documentation relevant to the circumstance.***

For more information on the Diplomat in Police Psychology or to obtain an application, please contact Dr. Scott Stubenrauch (swspsych@gmail.com).