455.02 License required to practice; use of titles. (1m) LICENSE REQUIRED. (a) Except as provided in sub. (2m) and ss. 257.03 and 455.03, no person may engage in the practice of psychology, or attempt to do so or make a representation as authorized to do so, without a license issued by the examining board. 

(b) Except as provided in sub. (2m) and ss. 257.03 and 455.03, only an individual licensed under s. 455.04 (1) or (2) may use the title “psychologist” or any similar title or state or imply that he or she is licensed to practice psychology. Except as provided in sub. (2m) and ss. 257.03 and 455.03, only an individual licensed under s. 455.04 (1) or (2) may represent himself or herself to the public by any description of services incorporating the word “psychological” or “psychology.”

(2m) EXCEPTIONS. A license under this chapter is not required for any of the following:

(a) A person lawfully practicing within the scope of a license, permit, registration, certificate or certification granted by this state.

(b) A person providing psychological services as directed, supervised and inspected by a psychologist who has the power to direct, decide and oversee the implementation of the services provided.

(c) The performance of official duties by personnel of any of the armed services or federal health services of the United States.

(d) A person employed in a position as a psychologist or psychological assistant by a regionally accredited higher educational institution, if the person is performing activities that are a part of the duties for which he or she is employed, is performing those activities solely within the confines of or under the jurisdictions of the institution in which he or she is employed, and does not render or offer to render psychological services to the public for a fee over and above the salary that he or she receives for the performance of the official duties with the institution with which he or she is employed. An individual acting under this paragraph may teach the practice of psychology, conduct psychological research, present lectures on the practice of psychology, perform any consultation required by his or her academic or research functions, or provide expert testimony in court related to his or her field of expertise. A person employed in a position under this paragraph may utilize or represent himself or herself by the academic or research title conferred upon him or her by the administration of the laboratory, school, college, or university or use the title “psychology professor” or “academic psychologist.”

(e) A person pursuing a course of study leading to a graduate degree in medicine, social work, marriage and family therapy or professional counseling at an accredited college or university while working in a training program, if the person’s activities and services constitute a part of his or her supervised course of study and the person is designated by a title that clearly indicates the training status appropriate to the person’s level of training.

(f) A person providing psychological services as part of a psychology training program, if his or her activities and services constitute a part of the supervised course of study and are performed under the supervision of a psychologist licensed under this chapter and the person does not provide or offer to provide psychological services to the public for a fee over and above the salary that he
or she may receive for the performance of the official duties with the employing agency or organization. A person providing services under this paragraph may use the title “psychology student,” “psychology intern,” or “psychology resident.”

(g) A person certified by the department of public instruction to provide psychological or counseling services, if the person is performing activities that are a part of the duties for which he or she is employed, is performing those activities solely within the confines of or under the jurisdiction of the school district by which he or she is employed and does not render or offer to render psychological services to the public for a fee over and above the salary that he or she receives for the performance of the official duties with the school district by which he or she is employed.

(i) An ordained member of the clergy of any religious denomination or sect who is associated with a church, synagogue or other religious organization, contributions to which are tax deductible for federal and state income tax purposes, if the member of the clergy is engaged in activities that are within the scope of his or her regular duties as a member of the clergy and that are not rendered to the public for a fee over and above the salary or other compensation that the member of the clergy receives for the performance of his or her official duties as a member of the clergy with the church, synagogue or religious organization with which he or she is associated.

(k) A person whose activities are limited to educational or vocational counseling or testing that is performed in a human resources, personnel, or educational setting.

(L) A mental health professional who has met all of the qualifications under s. DHS 61.96, Wis. Adm. Code, for employment as a mental health professional in an outpatient psychotherapy clinic certified by the department of health services under s. DHS 61.95, Wis. Adm. Code, if the person is performing activities that are a part of the duties for which he or she is employed by such a certified outpatient psychotherapy clinic and is performing those activities solely within the confines of or under the jurisdiction of the clinic by which he or she is employed.

(m) A person providing psychological services as an employee of a federal governmental agency, if the person is providing the psychological services as a part of the duties for which he or she is employed, is providing the psychological services solely within the confines of or under the jurisdiction of the agency by which he or she is employed, and does not provide or offer to provide psychological services to the public for a fee over and above the salary that he or she receives for the performance of the official duties with the agency by which he or she is employed.

(n) A person coordinating or participating in the activities of a nonprofit peer support group, if the person performs those activities solely within the confines of the peer support group and does not render or offer to render psychological services to the public for a fee.

(o) A person providing psychological services as an employee of a state or local governmental agency, if the person is providing the psychological services as a part of the duties for which he or she is employed, is providing the psychological services solely within the confines of or under the jurisdiction of the agency by which he or she is employed, does not provide or offer to provide psychological services to the public for a fee over and above the salary that he or she receives for the performance of the official duties with the agency by which he or she is employed, and has received a master’s degree in psychology from a regionally accredited higher educational institution or has fulfilled requirements commensurate with a master’s degree, as determined by the examining board. The examining board may promulgate rules to further establish requirements for exemptions under this paragraph for persons who do not hold a master’s degree in psychology. A person providing services under this paragraph may use the title “psychological associate.”

(p) A person providing psychological services under the supervision of a psychologist licensed under this chapter as part of a formal psychology fellowship program that meets the program standards of an organization as determined by the examining board. A person providing services under this paragraph may use the title “psychology fellow.”

(q) A person whose activities are limited to testifying in a court in this state regarding services rendered in another state.

(r) A person engaging in the private practice of school psychology who holds a valid private practice school psychologist license issued under s. 455.04 (4), 2019 stats. A person acting under this paragraph may use the title “private practice school psychologist.”

(s) A person who holds a doctoral degree in psychology but does not engage in the practice of psychology. A person described in this paragraph may use the title “psychologist” or “doctor of psychology.”


455.025 Practice of medicine and surgery. Nothing in this chapter shall be construed to authorize a psychologist to engage in the practice of medicine and surgery.

History: 2021 a. 22.

455.03 Temporary practice. A psychologist who is licensed or certified by a similar examining board of another state or territory of the United States or of a foreign country or province whose standards, in the opinion of the examining board, are equivalent to or higher than the requirements for licensure as a psychologist in s. 455.04 (1) may provide psychological services in this state on not more than 60 days in any year without holding a license issued under s. 455.04 (1). The psychologist shall report to the examining board the nature and extent of his or her practice in this state if it exceeds 20 days within a year. In this section, “day” means any part of a day during which psychological services are rendered.

History: 1989 a. 243; 2021 a. 22.

455.04 Licensure of psychologists. (1) Subject to s. 455.09, the examining board shall grant a psychologist license to an individual who submits an application for the license, pays the fee determined by the department under s. 440.03 (9), and satisfies all of the following requirements:

(a) Be at least 18 years of age.

(b) Subject to ss. 111.321, 111.322, and 111.335, not have a conviction record.

(c) Hold a doctoral degree in psychology from a program accredited by an organization approved by the examining board, or have had other academic training that the examining board determines to be substantially equivalent on the basis of standards established by rule. The examining board may require examinations to determine the equivalence of training for individuals holding doctoral degrees in psychology from non-American universities.

(d) Complete at least 3,000 hours of supervised graduate-level experience in the practice of psychology under conditions satisfactory to the examining board and established by rule. Supervised hours shall consist of all of the following:

1. At least 1,500 hours of experience in a successfully completed internship, which shall be accrued after the completion of all doctoral level coursework.

2. At least 1,500 hours of experience consisting of any combination of the following, as established by the examining board by rule:

   a. Pre-internship hours that occur after the completion of the first year of the doctoral program or at any time while in a doctoral
program after the completion of a master's degree in psychology or its equivalent, as defined by the examining board by rule.

b. Hours accrued in the internship described in sub. 1. that are in excess of the 1,500 hours required under subd. 1.

c. Post-internship hours accrued after the completion of the internship under subd. 1., but before the conferral of the doctoral degree.

d. Postdoctoral hours obtained after the conferral of the doctoral degree.

(5) Applicants for licensure under this section may be required to appear before the examining board in person prior to licensure to allow the examining board to make such inquiry of them as to qualifications and other matters as it considers proper.

History: 1971 c. 213 s. 5; 1975 c. 198; 1977 c. 192; 1981 c. 380; 1981 c. 391 s. 211; 1986 c. 403; 1989 a. 243 ss. 6 to 9, 12, 13; 1995 a. 27 s. 9145 (1); 1995 a. 188; 1997 a. 27; 2007 a. 20 s. 9121 (6) (a); 2021 a. 22.

Cross-reference: See also chs. Psy 2 and 3, Wis. adm. code.

455.045 Examinations. (1) In order to qualify for a psychologist license under s. 455.04 (1), an applicant must have passed all of the following examinations:

(a) A written examination on the professional practice of psychology.

(b) A written examination on state law related to the practice of psychology.

(2) The examining board shall set passing scores for examinations under sub. (1) (a) or (b). The examining board may adopt passing scores recommended by test developers.

History: 1989 a. 243; 2021 a. 22.

Cross-reference: See also chs. Psy 2 and 3, Wis. adm. code.

455.06 Renewals. (1) Except as provided in par. (b), the renewal dates for licenses issued under this chapter or under s. 455.04 (4), 2019 stats., are specified under s. 440.08 (2) (a), and the renewal fee for such licenses is determined by the department under s. 440.03 (9) (a).

(2) A license issued under s. 455.04 (2) is valid for 2 years or until the individual obtains a license under s. 455.04 (1) and may not be renewed, except that the examining board may promulgate rules specifying circumstances in which the examining board, in cases of hardship, may allow an individual to renew a license issued under s. 455.04 (2). Notwithstanding sub. (2), an individual holding a license issued under s. 455.04 (2) is not required to complete continuing education.

(2) An applicant for renewal of a license issued under this chapter or under s. 455.04 (4), 2019 stats., shall include with his or her application proof in the form specified by the examining board that he or she has completed the hours of continuing education required under s. 455.06.


Cross-reference: See also ch. Psy 4, Wis. adm. code.

455.065 Continuing education requirements. The examining board shall do all of the following:

(1) Promulgate rules establishing the minimum number of hours of continuing education, the topic areas that the continuing education must cover, the criteria for the approval of continuing education programs and courses required for renewal of a license, and the criteria for the approval of the sponsors and cosponsors of those continuing education programs and courses. The examining board may establish criteria for the substitution of hours of professional activities to meet continuing education requirements.

(4) Approve continuing education programs and courses in accordance with the criteria established under sub. (1).

(5) Promulgate rules establishing the criteria for the substitution of uncompensated hours of professional assistance volunteered to the department of health services for some or all hours of continuing education credits required under sub. (1). The eligible substitution hours shall involve professional evaluation of community programs for the certification and recertification of community mental health programs, as defined in s. 51.01 (3n), by the department of health services.

(6) Grant a postponement or waiver from the continuing education requirements under this section on the basis of prolonged illness or disability or on other grounds constituting extreme hardship. The examining board shall consider each application individually on its merits, and the examining board may grant a postponement, partial waiver, or total waiver of the requirement as the examining board deems appropriate.

(7) Grant an exemption from the continuing education requirements under this section to a psychologist who certifies to the examining board that he or she has permanently retired from the practice of psychology. A psychologist who has been granted an exemption under this subsection may not return to active practice without submitting evidence satisfactory to the examining board of having completed the required continuing education credits within the 2-year period prior to the return to the practice of psychology.


Cross-reference: See also ch. Psy 4, Wis. adm. code.

455.09 Disciplinary proceedings and actions. (1) Subject to the rules promulgated under s. 440.03 (1), the examining board may deny an application for a license, or may by order suspend for a period not exceeding one year, limit, revoke or impose probationary conditions upon a license or reprimand a licensee if the applicant or licensee:

(a) Subject to ss. 111.321, 111.322 and 111.335, is a felon.

(b) Subject to ss. 111.321, 111.322 and 111.34, engaged in the practice of psychology or the private practice of school psychology while his or her ability to practice was impaired by alcohol or other drugs.

(c) Impersonates another person holding a license under this chapter or allows another person to use his or her license.

(d) Uses fraud or deception in applying for a license under this chapter.

(e) Accepts a commission, rebate or other form of fee for referring persons to other professionals.

(f) Engages in the willful, unauthorized communication of information received in professional confidence.

(g) Violates this chapter or any rule of professional conduct promulgated under this chapter.

(h) Is grossly negligent in the practice of his or her profession.
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(2) A suspended license is subject to the requirements for renewal of the license under s. 440.08. The renewal of a suspended license does not entitle the licensee to any rights, privileges or authority conferred by the license while the license remains suspended.

(3) A revoked license may not be renewed. An individual may, no sooner than one year after the date of revocation, apply for reinstatement of a license under this chapter. The examining board may accept or reject an application for reinstatement. If reinstatement is granted under this subsection, the licensee shall pay a reinstatement fee in an amount equal to the renewal fee. This subsection does not apply to a license that is revoked under s. 440.12.

History: 1977 c. 125, 418; 1979 c. 162 s. 38 (7); 1981 c. 79 s. 17; 1981 c. 334 s. 25 (1); 1989 a. 243; 1991 a. 39; 1995 a. 188; 1997 a. 237; 2021 a. 22.

Cross-reference: See also ch. Psy 5, Wis. adm. code.

Petitioner is not entitled to present expert evidence indicating he or she previously testified truthfully when denying misconduct under sub. (1) (g). Davis v. Psychology Examining Board, 146 Wis. 2d 595, 431 N.W.2d 730 (Ct. App. 1988).

Laches is not available in any proceeding brought by the state in its sovereign capacity to protect a public right. A disciplinary proceeding is brought by the state in its sovereign capacity to protect a right of the public—the right to have licensed psychologists comply with the requirements of their licenses. Stein v. WI Psychology Examining Board, 2003 WI App 147, 265 Wis. 2d 781, 668 N.W.2d 112, 02−2726.

Construing rules of professional conduct adopted under s. 455.08 as applying to post-therapy conduct is necessary to effectuate the purpose of protecting the health, safety, or welfare of former clients. Bar−Av v. Psychology Examining Board, 2007 WI App 21, 299 Wis. 2d 387, 728 N.W.2d 722, 04−3251.

455.11 Penalty. Any person who violates this chapter may be fined not more than $200 or imprisoned not exceeding 6 months or both.