Name of Executive Director or Name of President or President-Elect

Name of State Psychological Association

Address

City, State Zip Code

[Date]

Dear Dr.\_\_\_\_\_\_,

We are writing to ask you to prioritize a major concern of graduate students and early career psychologists, and begin the process to change our state’s existing licensure policy to reflect APA’s policy on licensure eligibility in professional psychology.

In 2010, APA passed a model licensing act (<http://www.apapracticecentral.org/ce/state/model-act.aspx>) that says in Section D.2 (Experience Requirements): “APA recommends that legislation requires the equivalent of two full-time years of sequential, organized, supervised, professional experience prior to obtaining the license. This training may be completed prior or subsequent to the granting of the doctoral degree. For applicants prepared for practice in the health services domain of psychology, one of those two years of supervised professional experience shall be a predoctoral internship which may be completed as a part-time intern over a two-year period provided that the total experience is the equivalent of one year of full-time experience.”

We clearly understand that statutory and regulatory changes that reflect a change in the sequencing of education and training for licensure occur and are overseen at the state level.  We are asking that you start working towards or prioritizing making these changes in our state because this issue is of central importance to graduate students and early career psychologists. Through this work, we believe you will not only attract new student and early career members to your association, but retain and build a loyal cohort of members and future leaders. Beginning to advocate for the implementation of licensure policy changes in your state will demonstrate to students and early career psychologists that you are invested in and committed to our issues and future.

**Rationale for the Change**

In the decades since the original APA policy and Model Licensing Act was approved, which originally recommended a year of postdoctoral training for licensure, many significant changes have occurred within the education and practice arenas which have made the linkage of licensure and postdoctoral training outdated. Specifically, the model licensing law was implemented during a time when the predoctoral internship was the only form of clinical experience students received prior to the granting of the doctoral degree. In that context, most would agree that a year of post degree training would be necessary for licensure. However, today's training environment is drastically different and students are receiving substantially more clinical training prior to their predoctoral internships. For example, in a 2005 survey of internship applicants conducted by the Association of Psychology Postdoctoral and Internship Centers (APPIC), the median number of total practicum hours was 2,187 with a median of 906 direct client hours prior to applying for internship. This equates to slightly more than one year of full time work (1 yr full time hours = 2,080). Currently, the mean intervention and assessment hours reported by APPIC (2016) for internship applicants is 1,969. Therefore, most students are now receiving the equivalent of two years of clinical experience prior to completing their doctoral degree. This highlights our belief that the requirement for an extra year of supervised experience for entry level practice is no longer needed.

**Why Else This Change is Important**

Many in the training and practice communities believe that by de-linking licensure from postdoctoral training, we will actually have more systematic and better quality training environments. One of the major problems faced by postdoctoral programs relates to financial resources. Many programs currently cannot receive reimbursement for services provided by trainees. If postdoctoral trainees are licensed they may be eligible for more federal and state funding, which will also provide additional resources for quality training. Moreover, this allows early career psychologists to begin billing for services sooner, thus helping them deal with student debt which can range from a median of $75,000 to $200,000. Changing licensure also helps increase mobility for psychologists in any of the 18 states that have changed or are in the process of changing licensure requirements, and could potentially help fill the demand for psychologists in rural areas that lack in health care accessibility.

Because of these and many other changes in education and training over the years that are too numerous to outline here, several states have already begun to advocate for changing licensure laws and regulations. Currently, 16 states have already changed licensure requirements in line with APA’s Model Licensing Act, and several others are in the process of changing.

Currently, APA’s Committee on Early Career Psychologists is encouraging states to take up this issue and providing some resources for those willing to make the change. To get support from states that have already made this change, please check out the toolkit at [www.apa.org/careers/early-career](file:///C:\Users\RPV\Downloads\www.apa.org\careers\early-career).

**Professional Responsibility**

We are fully aware that state legislatures and state psychological associations may act independent of APA policy. However, we strongly believe that it is an important responsibility of the profession and its leaders to develop standards and guidelines that serve as models for others on matters related to professional affairs.  The APA Model Licensing Act is a good example of this responsibility.

This policy change reflects APA's understanding of the changing landscape of education and training in preparation for practice, and APA's commitment to modernizing policies that benefit our students and members while serving and protecting the public. This is an exciting time for our profession, with the introduction of a skills-based EPPP Step 2, and new focuses on the modern role of postdocs and specialties in our profession (e.g., APPIC 2016 postdoctoral summit and the Council on Specialties/ABPP/ASPPB specialty summits). It is absolutely the time to recognize the changes in our education and practice environments and to adjust state policies accordingly. As the future of the profession and of your association, we ask that you support us and our collective future by beginning to change the policy in your state or place priority on efforts already underway.

We can think of no better student and ECP recruitment and retention rationale that you can use than this important licensure issue. Please keep us updated and let us know how we can help. You can also reach out to the Office on ECPs at APA, which developed the toolkit mentioned earlier, by writing to them at earlycareer@apa.org.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

[your name/names of a coalition of signers]

[your contact information including email, phone, and mailing address]