

Content Outline

The Human Services-Board Certified Practitioner Examination (HS-BCPE)

Definition

The Human Services-Board Certified Practitioner Examination (HS-BCPE) is a certifying examination that measures a candidate's human services knowledge based on the Center for Credentialing & Education (CCE) core competencies, including how to apply the competencies and follow ethical guidelines. The qualifying criteria to take the HS-BCPE are stated in the minimally qualified candidate profile. Human services is a professional practice in which the practitioner has specialized education, training, and experience to work with individuals, families, communities, and systems to meet human needs. Human services practitioners identify problems, generate solutions, and assess progress.

Examination Purpose and Measurement Focus

The HS-BCPE provides a standardized measure of a human services professional's ability to apply and evaluate knowledge of core human services practices. HS-BCP certification signifies that certified practitioners subscribe to professional standards and ethics and voluntarily met board requirements, including the examination, based on national standards in the field of human services. The HS-BCPE was developed after a comprehensive job analysis process completed in 2025.

The core competencies associated with human services practice were determined to be:

- 1. History of Helping Professions**

The purpose, need, and role of human services and the interdisciplinary history that informs the intersection of allied professions in contemporary practice.

- 2. Professional Responsibilities and Ethics**

The professional values and ethical principles of human services include evidence-based practices, self-care, and advocacy while operating in compliance with organizational and governmental regulations.

- 3. Screening and Intake Assessment**

The identification of client needs and supports, barriers to and eligibility for service, and implementation of appropriate screenings and assessments in human services settings and roles.

4. **Service Delivery**

The delivery and management of human services based on understanding of client needs and goals, including participation in multidisciplinary teams supporting the client.

5. **Service Administrative Tasks**

The administration of tasks related to service delivery for human services clients, including resource allocation and collaboration with external agencies while maintaining appropriate records.

6. **Human Development**

The understanding of human development, milestones, sensory needs, relationship dynamics, and the impact of environmental and internal/external factors on development.

7. **Ecological Systems Perspectives**

The understanding that individual human development across the lifespan includes the interrelationship of different developmental processes (e.g., cognitive, social, biological) and the interplay of environmental systems that influence development.

Target Population and the Minimally Qualified Candidate

The minimally qualified candidate (MQC) for the HS-BCPE has a bachelor's or higher conferred degree in human services or a related field from an institutionally accredited college or university; and 350 hours of postgraduate human services work experience (work experience exemptions may be issued for human services educators, graduates of Council for Standards in Human Services Education–accredited programs, and certain graduates of preapproved participating programs).

Examination Form

The HS-BCPE is composed of 12 case studies comprised of a vignette followed by 10 multiple-choice questions each. The case studies present hypothetical clients, settings, and scenarios involving human services. Each case study assesses a candidate's ability to provide human services in a safe and effective way. Of the 120 examination items on the HS-BCPE, 100 items are scored and 20 are unscored items. Both scored and unscored items are of the same structure, and they appear in a randomized order throughout the examination. The 20 unscored multiple-choice questions provide statistical information for the items to be used in future examinations. You will have 3 hours to complete the examination.

Job Analysis and Content Outline

The HS-BCPE was developed based on a national job analysis of 303 human services practitioners who identified the competencies most relevant to human services practice. This content outline was drafted and approved by the HS-BCP Subject Matter Expert (SME) Committee in 2025. The committee's responsibilities included, but were not limited to, developing the examination blueprint by finalizing the content outline and deciding on weighting for each domain and sorting items into the domains. Table 1 presents the seven domains and the percentage of scored items on the HS-BCPE for each domain.

Table 1. *The weight for each domain*

	Domain	Percent of scored items
1	History of Helping Professions	10
2	Professional Responsibilities and Ethics	23
3	Screening and Intake Assessment	12
4	Service Delivery	20
5	Service Administrative Tasks	10
6	Human Development	10
7	Ecological Systems Perspectives	15

Table 2. *Knowledge, skills, and tasks related to the domains*

The following work behaviors were identified in a job analysis and by human services subject matter experts as competencies most relevant for human services practice. These work behaviors are meant to be general in scope and applicable to various human services settings.

1. History of Helping Professions

- a. Identify what it means to be a helping professional in the field of human services.
- b. Know the interdisciplinary history of the human services profession.
- c. Understand what human services practitioners and related professionals do.
- d. Understand the intersection of allied professions in contemporary human services
- e. Understand the purpose or need for human services.
- f. Understand the concept of mutual aid and its historical role.
- g. Understand the principles and historical impact of community organization.

2. Professional Responsibilities and Ethics

- a. Maintain confidentiality of records.
- b. Adhere to an established, relevant code of ethics.
- c. Recognize and disclose conflicts of interest.
- d. Understand when to report unethical behaviors.
- e. Inform the client of legal and ethical standards of practice.
- f. Obtain the client's informed consent and applicable releases of information.
- g. Explain to the client their rights in the human services relationship.
- h. Understand the concepts of autonomy in client care.
- i. Use person-first language
- j. Differentiate between appropriate and inappropriate self-disclosure.
- k. Communicate empathy for clients.
- l. Establish and maintain appropriate boundaries with clients.
- m. Understand the ethical guidelines for using technology for service delivery.
- n. Provide services in compliance with organizational and governmental regulations.
- o. Protect the safety and well-being of clients in the service environment.
- p. Utilize evidence-based practices.
- q. Engage in stress management and burnout prevention activities.
- r. Recognize the impact of one's own preconceived notions or prejudgment on one's perceptions of the client's motivations, actions, knowledge, resources, and behaviors.
- s. Communicate with supervisor, seasoned colleague, or mentor when faced with experiencing strong perceptions of the client linked to demographic variables.
- t. Understand the impacts of racism, discrimination, biases, and stereotypes on all aspects of health and access to services.
- u. Maintain a professional network.
- v. Engage in professional development through continuing education.
- w. Participate in receiving mentorship or supervision.
- x. Read current professional literature.
- y. Participate in professional organization activities.

- z. Educate the public and other professionals about human services and related credentials.
- aa. Advocate for equitable access to services.
- bb. Participate in community organization and advocacy.
- cc. Understand the human services practitioner's role in community organization.

3. Screening and Intake Assessment

- a. Identify the presenting needs of clients.
- b. Identify services based on appropriate assessment tailored to needs of client.
- c. Identify barriers (e.g., moral, financial, spiritual, access) to the provision of services.
- d. Assess for safety and potential for harm to self or others.
- e. Identify existing client support systems.
- f. Identify barriers to goal attainment.
- g. Determine eligibility for services.
- h. Observe nonverbal communication during the assessment process.
- i. Select appropriate assessment procedures.
- j. Identify case management needs for ongoing assessment.
- k. Evaluate protective and insulative factors.
- l. Screen for behavioral signs and symptoms associated with mental disorders.
- m. Establish and document a client's baseline (e.g., physical appearance, health, and mental health).
- n. Write SMART goals with the client.

4. Service Delivery

- a. Understand problem-solving and decision-making skills.
- b. Understand the signs and types of abuse and appropriate responses (e.g., emotional, physical, substance, financial, sexual, elderly, neglect).
- c. Work with clients to identify strengths, build empowerment, and strengthen self-autonomy.
- d. Understand and facilitate crisis/conflict intervention/de-escalation.
- e. Monitor and evaluate long- and short-term service goals and progress in collaboration with the client.

- f. Participate as a member of a multidisciplinary team (e.g., teachers, parents, medical professionals, mental health professionals).
- g. Understand service provisions via technology (e.g., databases, telehealth).
- h. Provide applicable life skills training (e.g., social/relational skills, budget management, emotional regulation, literacy skills).
- i. Implement trauma-related service interventions and/or programs.
- j. Develop and implement harm reduction strategies and client safety plans.
- k. Evaluate and facilitate the appropriateness of various intervention modalities.
- l. Discuss discharge and referral process with the client.
- m. Effectively convey and periodically review informed consent with client.

5. Service Administrative Tasks

- a. Evaluate service guidelines for ethical compliance.
- b. Understand applicable resources/services for client.
- c. Work collaboratively with clients and colleagues (e.g., participate in mentorship or supervision).
- d. Serve as a liaison to other agencies.
- e. Understand the roles and functions of interdisciplinary team members.
- f. Conduct community outreach (e.g., identify local services, engage with immigrant communities, collaborate with city council).
- g. Comply with standards of effective documentation and record keeping.

6. Human Development

- a. Understand the stages of human development (e.g., childhood, adolescence, early adulthood, adulthood, death & dying).
- b. Understand and address various sensory needs.
- c. Understand how to assess developmental milestones.
- d. Understand healthy and unhealthy relationship dynamics.
- e. Recognize environmental effects on human development (e.g., trauma, abuse, teratogens).
- f. Understand the impact of internal and external effects on human development.

7. Ecological Systems Perspectives

- a. Reflect on one's own personal culture and its potential impacts on service provision.
- b. Understand the intersection of culture, context, values, and behaviors.
- c. Understand compound dimensions of lived experiences.
- d. Understand how preconceived perceptions and automatic associations may influence how a client engages with the world.
- e. Understand how preconceived perceptions and automatic associations may influence how a human services professional engages with a client.
- f. Understand the differences between equity and equality.
- g. Understand the major interactions between ecological systems (e.g., social, familial, community).
- h. Understand the complex needs of communities that have traditionally had limited access to services.
- i. Understand how systemic and historical factors impact human relationships and individual engagement (e.g., stigma, demographic factors, environmental factors, economic factors, and factors impacting access).