



*This article is based on a presentation by Renee Compton, PTA, Chair, Washington State Board of Physical Therapy; Stefanie Palma, PT, DPT, Med, NCS, CBIS, President, Georgia State Board of Physical Therapy; Barbara Sanders, PT, PhD, FAPTA, Professor and Chair, Department of Physical Therapy, Texas State University; Jennifer Wissinger, PT, DPT, Board member, Physical Therapy section, Ohio OTPTAT Board; Lorin Mueller, PhD, Managing Director of Assessment, FSBPT; Jeffrey M. Rosa, Managing Director of Post Licensure Services, FSBPT; and Richard Woolf, PT, DPT, Assessment Content Manager, FSBPT, at the 2018 FSBPT Annual Meeting.*

## **Developing Meaningful Jurisprudence Assessment Tools**

Of the fifty-three FSBPT member boards that regulate physical therapy, thirty (57 percent) have some kind of jurisprudence requirement for initial licensure. Five states have a Jurisprudence Assessment Module (JAM) developed by FSBPT. Six states have a law examination developed or administered by FSBPT at Prometric test centers. Eight jurisdictions have an examination that was developed by the licensing board and is administered online. Eleven jurisdictions have an examination that was developed by the licensing board and is administered by paper and pencil.

When it comes to license renewal, only twenty-five (43 percent) of FSBPT member boards require a jurisprudence and/or ethics requirement at the time of license renewal. In many cases, there is a requirement that part of continuing education has to cover content in jurisprudence and ethics. This could be met by an examination, a course, a board forum, or another method.

It is critical for licensees and applicants to understand the laws and rules they practice under — many board actions have little to do with clinical competence but typically relate to lapses in following practice rules and ethical behavior. Because laws and rules change in response to evidence-based regulation, advances in technology, and changes in the health care environment, ensuring that jurisdictions have effective methods for communicating current laws and rules both at initial licensure and renewal is helpful to reducing board sanctions.

Methods for informing licensees about changes in the jurisdiction's practice act include emails, board forums, school visits, and presentations by board members and staff to licensees and students throughout the jurisdiction. This article focuses on methods used by four states (Washington, Ohio, Georgia, and Texas) to help licensees understand the laws and rules through different types of jurisprudence examinations or assessments.

### **Washington**

Washington has an online assessment with sixteen questions. Candidates have unlimited retakes but must answer 100 percent of the questions correctly to pass. After completion, candidates print and mail a certificate of completion to the Washington State Department of

Health. The examination is a requirement for new licensure within the state and is not used for renewal purposes. The board periodically (typically annually) modifies the examination based on areas that have generated questions from licensees or on problem areas where disciplinary action may have taken place.

### **Advantages of the Current Approach**

- Fairly easy to create and modify
- Candidates can take the examination at home or anywhere with internet access
- Questions can focus on laws/rules that may be of chief concern to board members
- Helps candidates become familiar with how to look up information in the practice act

### **Considerations for Future Improvement**

- Currently only candidates for licensure take the examination. Is there an opportunity to ensure all licensees maintain familiarity with the practice act as well as any changes to the laws and rules?
- Could the psychometrics of the examination be reviewed to see if the questions are performing well?

## **Ohio**

Ohio has a secure examination developed by FSBPT and administered at Prometric test centers. Candidates must get approval from the board to sit for the jurisprudence examination. Each test has fifty multiple-choice questions. Candidates must earn a scale score of 600 to pass the jurisprudence examination. The examination is a requirement for new licensure within the state and is not used for renewal purposes. FSBPT monitors the performance of the examination, provides a report to the jurisdiction, and suggests modifications to the examination. If modifications are made, a new test form must be sent to Prometric test centers.

### **Advantages of the Current Approach**

- Strong test security
- Test forms built from a content outline
- Items and test forms created by experienced test developers
- Items and test forms are reviewed for content and psychometric properties regularly

### **Considerations for Future Improvement**

- Currently only candidates for licensure take the examination. Is there an opportunity to ensure all licensees maintain familiarity with the practice act as well as any changes to the laws and rules?

## **Georgia**

Georgia has a Jurisprudence Assessment Module (JAM). It was developed and is administered online by the FSBPT with review by the board. All applicants for new licensure in Georgia must pass the JAM prior to licensure. Georgia licensees may fulfill all the mandatory ethics and

jurisprudence continuing education requirements (four units) by completing the JAM. The test has fifty multiple-choice questions, and candidates have ninety minutes to complete the examination. Candidates have two attempts to answer each question correctly. The first time a candidate answers a question incorrectly, the candidate is provided the laws and rules reference and can review the reference on the screen. The second time the candidate answers incorrectly, the item is counted as incorrect and the candidate is provided the rationale for the correct answer. Candidates must answer 80 percent of the questions correctly (within the first or second response) to achieve a passing score.

#### **Advantages of the Current Approach**

- Periodic law and rule changes can be updated quickly
- Test forms built from a content outline
- Items and test forms created by experienced test developers
- Items and test forms are reviewed for content and psychometric properties regularly
- Candidates can take the examination at home or anywhere with internet access

#### **Considerations for Future Improvement**

- What is the best way to work with licensees who struggle with an internet-based examination?

#### **Texas**

Texas has a Jurisprudence Assessment Module with similar features to the Georgia JAM, but the Texas JAM has seventy-five questions and candidates have two hours and twenty minutes to complete the examination. Twenty-five items deal with ethical and professional responsibilities and are referenced to several ethics and professional conduct documents. Successful completion of the Texas JAM is required for initial licensure and is also a requirement for license renewal.

#### **Advantages of the Current Approach**

- Ability to assess knowledge of laws and ethics in a single assessment
- Periodic law and rule changes can be updated quickly
- Test forms built from a content outline
- Items and test forms created by experienced test developers
- Items and test forms are reviewed for content and psychometric properties regularly
- Candidates can take the examination at home or anywhere with internet access

#### **Considerations for Future Improvement**

- What is the best way to work with licensees who struggle with an internet-based examination?

#### **How can FSBPT Help your Jurisdiction?**

FSBPT may be a resource when considering what would work best for your jurisdiction for jurisprudence assessment. There are several things to consider:

- The best testing format for your goal
- Using the test for initial licensure only or for renewal
- How to develop the content of the examination
- Security of the examination
- Assuring the quality of the test items
- How often to update test forms

FSBPT can also help you to make your jurisprudence exam more transparent to candidates and licensees. For example, in 2019, FSBPT is adding a link to the content outlines and other information on each jurisdiction's jurisprudence exams on the Licensure Reference Guide on FSBPT's website. If your jurisdiction has information they would like to share, or is looking for information on what to share, please contact us.

Whether your jurisdiction is making decisions regarding changes to an existing examination or is considering the development of a new examination for initial licensure and/or licensure renewal, please consider FSBPT as a resource to help you in your efforts to ensure that candidates and licensees understand the laws and rules that govern the practice of physical therapy.



**Renee Compton**, PTA, is the current chair of the Washington State Physical Therapy Board and has been a board member since 2012. The state of Washington developed its own physical therapy jurisprudence exam years ago. The board has recently analyzed the benefits and detriments to maintaining its own exam and the efficacy of having licensees take the exam just once for initial licensure.



**Stefanie Palma**, PT, DPT, Med, NCS, CBIS, is currently practicing physical therapy offering neurologic outpatient physical therapy services. She has taught over thirty-two years and practiced over forty years. She serves as President of the Georgia State Board of Physical Therapy. Her teaching interests are Ethics and Jurisprudence covering the practice of physical therapy with emphasis on specifics of the Georgia law. She assisted with the process of the Georgia Board's adoption of the Georgia Jurisprudence Assessment Module (GA JAM).



**Barbara Sanders**, PT, PhD, FAPTA, has been Chair of the Department of Physical Therapy at Texas State University for over thirty years. An active member of APTA, Sanders has served in leadership positions at the local, chapter, section, and national level. She is currently President of the American Council of Academic Physical Therapy (ACAPT), an organization that represents the over 200 physical therapy schools. She is Vice Chair of the Texas Board of Physical Therapy Examiners and Chair of the Board's Education Committee.



**Jennifer Wissinger**, PT, DPT, is in her second term on the Ohio Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy, and Athletic Trainers (OTPTAT) Board. She has served as secretary, as well as on the correspondence and enforcement committees for the Physical Therapy Section of the Board. Her work experience includes practice as a clinician in a variety of settings and as an instructor in the DPT program at Ohio State University.



**Lorin Mueller**, PhD, joined the Federation of State Boards of Physical Therapy (FSBPT) in 2011 as its Managing Director of Assessment. Prior to joining FSBPT, Lorin spent ten years as Principal Research Scientist at the American Institutes for Research in Washington, D.C. Lorin received his PhD in Industrial and Organizational Psychology with a specialization in statistics and measurement in 2002 from the University of Houston.



**Jeff Rosa** is the Managing Director of Post Licensure Services for the Federation of State Boards of Physical Therapy. Jeff joined the Federation of State Boards of Physical Therapy in August 2015. He previously served for twelve years as the Executive Director of the physical therapy licensing board in Ohio. Prior to joining the Ohio PT Board, Jeff worked for the Ohio Board of Nursing and as a budget analyst with the Ohio Legislative Service Commission. Jeff holds a Bachelor of Arts in History from Yale University and a Master of Public Policy from the Gerald Ford School of Public Policy at the University of Michigan.



**Richard Woolf**, PT, DPT, is the Assessment Content Manager for the FSBPT. Previously, he worked as the Director of Rehabilitation at a hospital in Arizona. Prior to joining the FSBPT, Richard had volunteered as an item writer and item writer coordinator for several years. He is also a Certified Strength and Conditioning Specialist with the National Strength and Conditioning Association. He received his Master of Physical Therapy from Northern Arizona University and his Doctorate of Physical Therapy from A.T. Still University – Arizona School of Health Sciences.

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