

General changes to SUDP rules

All rule changes effective May 30, 2025



Improve readability

- Remove redundancies and clarify language throughout chapter;
- Clarify ethical standards & expectations
- Add in new definitions
- Clarify no practice on a pending credential



Reduce administrative barriers

- Update education degrees
- Clarify examination and application process
- Clarify supervision standards
- Clarify structure for Trainee support and credentialing

Standards for Ethical & Professional Conduct

Intent: Reduce historically high disciplinary rates for this profession by clarifying standards and creating clearer structure for SUDPTs to discuss ethical requirements with supervisor(s)

Adopted changes:

- Requires SUDP/Ts to follow an industry-recognized code of conduct, such as the NAADAC Code of Ethics.
- Clarifies prohibited conduct (e.g., boundary violations)
- Requires Approved Supervisors to review a code of ethics with each SUDP Trainee they supervise

SUDP Trainee Certification Standards

Intent: Establish minimum standards for SUDPT certification and renewal to support individuals entering and remaining in the profession.

Adopted Changes

- Updates language in education declaration to “currently enrolled” and “actively completing” coursework.
- Clarifies that SUDPTs cannot practice on a pending credential (as required in RCW 18.205.030).
- Requires a four-hour training in ethics and law for SUDPT initial certification.
- Requires verification of education (transcripts) and supervised experience for annual SUDPT renewal (ensure compliance with supervision and education requirements).

Out of State Applicants

Intent: Implement changes to support applicants with out of state experience and/or qualifying out of state credentials.

Adopted changes:

- Creates path for out of state credentials evaluated to have substantially equivalent licensing standards; expedites application process for these candidates.
- Allows the department to waive the requirement for applicants to submit supervised experience if they have held a credential as an SUD counselor for at least one year in another state.

Supervision Standards

Intent: Creates supervision structure required in all settings where SUDPTs are now able to work (e.g., outside of BHAs)

Adopted Changes

- Requires SUDPTs to complete at least 10 hours each in assessment, individual counseling, and group counseling as part of the first 50 hours under direct observation.
- Requires weekly supervision between an SUDPT and their approved supervisor; can include group/triadic supervision
- Requires SUDPTs and their approved supervisor to complete a 5-part plan including 1) review of ethical standards, 2) clinical development goals, 3) review of academic progress toward SUDP certification, 4) identifying an alternate supervisor, and 5) identifying the appropriate trainee-to-client ratio -- all consistent with the individual Trainee's experience, skills, and education.

Supervision Standards, cont.

- Requires Approved Supervisors to complete at least 28 hours in clinical supervisor training before or within their first year providing supervision to SUDP Trainees.
- Reduces experience required to become an Approved Supervisor from 3000 hours (18 months) to one year as a fully certified SUDP (2000 hours).
- Permits remote supervision for SUDPTs after the first 50 hours under direct observation have occurred; prior rules required SUDP Supervisors to be physically on-site at all times.

Continuing Education

Intent: Reduce CE burden on professionals.

Adopted Changes

- Reduces two-year CE requirement to 20 hours (from 40), which can include up to four hours of professional development activities
- Clarifies qualifying activities
- Clarifies required specific CE hours:
 - 4 hours in Law and Ethics (every 2 years)
 - 2 hours in Health Equity (every 4 years)
 - 3 hours in Suicide Assessment (every 6 years)

Additional Changes

- Allows applicants with a qualifying degree to meet the requirements WAC 246-811-030(3) a-w
- Implements temporary \$100 fee cap created by SB 6228 and states that the cap relies on future funding from state legislators
- Creates rule for SUDP Apprenticeship program application standards
- Clarifies that SUDPT Apprentices may need to complete 4000 hours of supervised experience to qualify for SUDP certification, as required by the apprenticeship
- Requires SUDPT disclosures to include their approved supervisor's name, credential number, and contact information

Questions? Contact Claire.Wilson@doh.wa.gov

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