

D. Exemptions for Psychologists

Should legislation be written to include exemptions for psychologists who are salaried employees of certain organizations, such as state and Federal agencies, research laboratories, or academic institutions?

By wording and by implication, present laws cover only the *applied* activities of psychologists rather than their teaching and research activities. To require the nonpracticing, salaried psychologist of the above named organizations to be certified or licensed is contrary to the generally stated purposes for legislation, since there may be little need to protect the public from the activities of teaching and research within such institutions. Furthermore, requiring such psychologists to obtain a certificate or license places upon them an unwarranted financial burden from which they derive no apparent direct benefit.

On the other hand, it is becoming increasingly common for psychologists employed for a salary by various institutions also to provide direct services of an applied nature to the public, often for a fee. Being a practitioner is not limited to any single field of psychology nor to any one setting. So the question becomes whether some guarantee should be given the public that such psychologists are qualified under the laws governing the practice of psychology in that state. The argument is given that the competence of such a psychologist is assessed by his institution before he is hired, that his activities are constantly evaluated while he is employed, and that the institution itself will assume responsibility for his activities. In practice, however, this is not always the case. Institutions do not always assess psychologists with respect to the skills and techniques they utilize in their outside applied activities, and it is questionable whether such institutions in fact would assume responsibility for the consulting activities engaged in by salaried employees outside of the normal duties for which they were hired. Furthermore, it may not be a valid assumption that Federal, state, or private institutions are qualified to judge the competence of those they hire, especially in areas of their consulting activities.

Does the issue, then, revolve around whether the salaried psychologist renders his services for a fee? Is this the only point where there is a need for control by legislation of the qualifications for practice? While our Committee answers these questions affirmatively, we also are aware of the difficulty of defining "fee." Is a contract to do survey research, with a later feedback of the findings for the purpose of facilitating change in an organization, to be considered under the definition of "providing services for a fee"? Does the salaried university psychologist who consults for a Federal agency provide psychological services for a fee?

In their September 1964 interim report the ad hoc Committee on the Scientific and Professional Aims of Psychology proposed that:

"All laws should exempt salaried employees of academic institutions, state and Federal agencies, research laboratories, and business corporations while performing their duties for such organizations. Such exemptions, however, should not exclude the business or corporation per se from certification where they sell psychological services to the public."

Although implementation of such exemptions may leave loopholes, our Committee agrees in principle with the SPAP Committee and offers the following guidelines and recommendations with respect to this complex issue:

"8. Persons employed as psychologists by accredited academic institutions, governmental agencies, research laboratories, and business corporations should be exempted, provided such employees are performing those duties for which they are employed by such organizations, and within the confines of such organizations."

This does not mean that psychologists should stop their continuing efforts to improve the quality of psychological services offered within the confines of such employment settings.

"9. Persons employed as psychologists by accredited academic institutions, governmental agencies, research laboratories, and business corporations consulting or offering their research findings or providing scientific information to like organizations for a fee should be exempted."

"10. Persons employed as psychologists who offer or provide psychological services to the public for a fee, over and above the salary that they receive for the performance of their regular duties should not be exempted."

"11. Persons employed as psychologists by organizations that sell psychological services to the public should not be exempted."

Recommendations 8 through 11 cover the activities of psychologists. It is also necessary, in licensing legislation, to authorize activities of a psychological