AAPL EXAMINER
American Academy of Psychiatry and the Law

VAAPL: A New Era of Forensic Psychiatry Education

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The American Academy of Psychiatry and the Law (AAPL) continues to expand its commitment to lifelong learning through its dynamic virtual education platform, Virtual AAPL (VAAPL). Designed to meet the evolving needs of forensic psychiatrists, VAAPL offers members an accessible, flexible, and comprehensive way to stay current with developments across the field, while earning Continuing Medical Education (CME) credits.

A Robust and Expanding Educational Resource

VAAPL was established in 2021 to provide high-quality online learning opportunities, initially in response to the COVID-19 pandemic but now recognized as a lasting and valuable member benefit. Today, it serves as a central hub for virtual education, offering a wide array of courses, panels, and lectures that span the full spectrum of forensic psychiatry.

Educational offerings cover diverse practice areas, including criminal and civil forensic psychiatry, corrections and correctional health care, legal regulation, research, and special topics. Content is also tailored to patient populations across the lifespan, from children and adolescents to geriatric populations. This breadth ensures that members can find relevant material regardless of their subspecialty or clinical focus.

With nearly 100 different trainings available, members can explore the learning catalog or use the search function to quickly locate content aligned with their interests. Courses vary in length and cost, with AAPL members benefiting from reduced pricing. Importantly, CME credits are available for many offerings and are awarded through the same rigorous accreditation process used for the AAPL Annual Meeting.

Personalized Learning at Your Fingertips

One of VAAPL's standout features is its user-friendly Education Center, which allows members to tailor their learning experience. After logging in through the AAPL website, users can browse the catalog, enroll in courses, and track their educational progress.

The “My Content” section provides a centralized location to manage all learning activities. Here, members can review completed courses, access CME certificates, track purchases, and monitor both past and upcoming events. This personalized dashboard enhances convenience and helps streamline professional development.

How to Access VAAPL Training

- Visit the VAAPL page on the AAPL website.
- Log in using your existing AAPL account credentials.
- Once logged in, members can explore the learning catalog or use the search bar to find specific topics.

Opportunities to Contribute: Submit Your Own Educational Content

Beyond accessing content, VAAPL invites members to actively contribute to the educational community. Submissions are now being accepted for virtual courses, panel discussions, and other educational formats.

VAAPL supports a wide range of presentation types, including panels, one-hour lectures, town halls, and full courses. While highly interactive workshops may be less suited for the virtual format, most educational concepts can be effectively adapted for online delivery.

The submission process mirrors that of the AAPL Annual Meeting. Proposals are peer-reviewed by members of the VAAPL Committee, who evaluate submissions based on educational value, relevance, and their ability to address identified learning gaps. This rigorous review process ensures that VAAPL maintains the high standards expected by AAPL members.

How to Submit a VAAPL Proposal

Members interested in submitting educational content can follow these steps:

- Visit the AAPL website and navigate to the VAAPL page
- Click on “VAAPL Call for Papers”
- Download the required materials, including:
    - Abstract submission guidelines
    - CME criteria
    - Abstract submission form
    - Financial disclosure form
    - Frequently asked questions

- Complete all required documents and submit them as instructed

Expanding Access and Engagement

VAAPL represents an important evolution in how AAPL delivers education. While in-person meetings remain invaluable for networking and live interaction, the virtual format offers unique advantages—most notably increased accessibility and the ability to reach a broader audience. For presenters, VAAPL also provides additional opportunities to share expertise, especially given the limited presentation slots at the annual meeting.

Whether you are looking to deepen your knowledge, earn CME credits, or contribute to the field, VAAPL offers a flexible and engaging platform to support your professional growth. AAPL members are encouraged to explore the Education Center, take advantage of available courses, and consider submitting their own educational content to help shape the future of forensic psychiatry education. As Jonas Rappeport, one of AAPL's founding visionaries, emphasized through his life's work, the strength of forensic psychiatry lies in its commitment to careful scholarship, ethical practice, and the continuous exchange of knowledge—reminding us that by teaching and learning from one another, we strengthen both our profession and its enduring standards of excellence.