



Travis County Psychology Internship Program

Policies & Procedures

Developed by the TC-PIP Training Committee

Updated: 7/1/2013

Administrative & Financial Resources Policy

I. Stipend & Benefits

- a. The annual stipend for the internship program will be a minimum of \$28,000.
- b. Health benefits will be provided to all interns.
- c. Annual vacation, professional, and sick leave will be provided to all interns.

II. Resources

- a. TC-PIP interns have access to numerous resources. Assessment and other training materials are provided, and additional materials may be purchased through the County with Training Committee approval.
- b. Each intern has access to administrative and IT support via the department.
- c. Within Detention and Residential Services, group interventions are typically conducted on the units. Space is available throughout the department for individual work, training sessions, and conferences. Client records are maintained in secured areas on assigned units. Interns are provided keys to access these areas when they start the internship program.
- d. Interns have a shared office space with access to computer workstations on an institutional network with Internet access. Due to the nature of the work environment, computer security is essential. Prior to use, each intern is issued a password, and additional passwords may be necessary to access other programs. Passwords must be changed every 90 days at a minimum. Most information accessed through the various computer systems is confidential information and must be shredded prior to disposal.
- e. A resource library has been created to provide interns with books, videos, and other materials commonly used in treatment. This collection of resources has been placed in the interns' office for use throughout the year.
- f. The Assessment Services Division maintains a wide variety of standard testing material and equipment to screen and assess intellectual functioning, behavioral functioning, personality dynamics, and neuropsychological functioning.
- g. Some specialized programs, such as scoring programs, are located on designated computers for use with report writing, and a variety of assessment instruments are available for use. At present, the department maintains computer scoring and interpretation programs for the following tests: Child Behavior Checklist, Youth Self-Report, MACI, MMPI-A, and the PAI-A.

Application Process and Selection Criteria Policy

The Travis County Psychology internship Program (TC-PIP) offered two (2) full-time positions in 2012-2013 and three (3) full-time positions in 2013-2014. Starting with the 2014-2015 training year, the program will offer four (4) full-time positions.

The internship program is a member of APPIC; the Program Code for TC-PIP is **202911**. Students interested in applying for the internship program should submit an online application through the APPIC website (www.appic.org).

A complete application consists of the following materials:

1. A completed on-line AAPI (APPIC's standard application)
2. Cover letter (as part of the on-line AAPI) stating why you are interested in the internship
3. A current Curriculum Vitae (as part of the on-line AAPI)
4. Three letters of recommendation, two of which must be from persons who have directly supervised your clinical work (as part of the on-line AAPI) - *please submit no more than three letters*
5. Official transcripts of all graduate coursework
6. A sample psychological report

All application materials must be received by December 1st in order to be considered. If applicants are invited to interview, they will be notified by email on or before the December 15th deadline. Interviews will be scheduled in early January. Onsite interviews are preferred, but accommodations will be made for individuals who cannot interview in person.

TC-PIP will base its selection process on the entire application package noted above; however, applicants who have met the following qualifications prior to beginning internship will be considered preferred:

- 1) A minimum of 500 intervention hours
- 2) A minimum of 50 assessment hours
- 3) Dissertation proposal defended
- 4) Comprehensive exams completed
- 5) Some experience or special interest in working with youth and families
- 6) Experience in psychological test administration and report writing

In addition, given the community's need for Spanish-speaking mental health providers, applicants who are bilingual in English/Spanish are encouraged to apply.

Diversity and Non-Discrimination Policy

The Travis County Psychology Internship Program strongly values diversity and believes in creating an equitable, hospitable, appreciative, safe, and inclusive learning environment for its interns. Diversity among interns and supervisors enriches the educational experience, promotes personal growth, and strengthens communities and the workplace. Every effort is made by TC-PIP to create a climate in which all staff and interns feel respected, comfortable, and in which success is possible and obtainable. TC-PIP strives to make every effort to dispel ignorance or anxiety associated with multicultural experiences. TC-PIP's training program includes an expected competency in diversity training, and multiple experiences are provided to be sure that interns are both personally supported and well-trained in this area.

TC-PIP welcomes applicants from diverse backgrounds. It is the belief of the program faculty and Travis County administrators that a diverse training environment contributes to the overall quality of the program. TC-PIP provides equal opportunity to all prospective interns and does not discriminate because of a person's race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, or any other factor that is irrelevant to success as a psychology intern. Applicants are individually evaluated in terms of quality of previous training, practicum experiences, and fit with the internship.

Grievance and Due Process Procedures

Grievance Procedures:

Interns are encouraged to report all concerns regarding ethical, professional, or administrative problems. Most issues can be informally resolved through discussion with clinical supervisors and/or the Training Director. Travis County Juvenile Probation emphasizes early identification of potential problems, cooperative efforts at resolution, and open communication.

Interns may address grievances about a supervisor, staff member, trainee, or the training program either informally or formally.

I. Informal Review

- a. Interns should make every effort to resolve their complaints informally and directly with the person who is the subject of the complaint. When such resolution is not practical due to power and authority differences or other factors, interns are encouraged to seek consultation from the Training Director and/or a senior staff member to explore ways of reaching a resolution.

II. Formal Review

- a. Interns have the right to activate a formal review when they believe their rights have been violated. Additionally interns may report concerns to their academic institution, APA, or APPIC, as appropriate.
- b. In instances of workplace-related complaints, interns are expected to follow the procedures outlined below.
 - i. If the intern wishes to file a formal complaint, this will need to be submitted in writing to the Training Director with sufficient details describing the nature of the problem. The Training Director will review the complaint to determine if it merits further inquiry. If the Training Director determines the complaint does not merit further inquiry but the intern perceives a continued problem, the intern may bring his/her complaint to the Chief Juvenile Probation Officer or his/her designee. If the Training Director is the subject of the intern's complaint, one of the other psychologists who make up the Training Committee will become the point of contact regarding the intern's grievance. The Training Director (or Training Committee member, if applicable) will meet with the intern and the individual being grieved within 10 working days of receipt of the intern's written grievance. The goal of the joint meeting is to develop a plan of action to resolve the issue. In some cases, the Training Director may wish to meet with the intern and the person being grieved separately first.
 - ii. The Training Director will document the outcome of the meeting, including the identified plan of action. The intern and the person being grieved will be asked to report back to the Training Director within 10 working days as to whether the issue has been adequately resolved.
 - iii. If the plan of action fails to adequately resolve the issue, the Training Committee will convene to review the issue within 10 working days of the Training Director receiving the follow-up report from the intern and the individual being grieved. The Training Committee will review all written materials and have an opportunity to interview the parties involved as well

as other individuals who have relevant information. The Training Committee has final discretion regarding outcome. If the panel determines that a grievance against a staff member has merit, the issue will be turned over to the department to initiate due process procedures as outlined for employees.

- c. If the intern's complaint indicates ethical misconduct or potential for harm, the Training Director may choose to suspend the potentially harmful relationship until further investigation has been completed.

Due Process Procedures:

The training program has procedures in place to address inadequate or unacceptable trainee performance. These procedures help ensure that judgments or decisions made by the internship program about interns are not arbitrary or personally biased.

For the purposes of procedural policy, inadequate or unacceptable trainee performance is defined broadly as interference in professional functioning that is reflected in one or more of the following ways:

1. an inability and/or unwillingness to acquire and integrate professional standards into one's professional behavior,
2. an inability and/or unwillingness to acquire professional skills necessary to reach an acceptable level of competency,
3. an inability and/or unwillingness to manage personal stress, psychological problems, and/or excessive emotional reactions that interfere with professional functioning.

Problems affecting an intern's performance may be identified either through formal evaluation procedures or through the informal interactions of supervisors and other training staff working with the intern. Some situations of inadequate or unacceptable intern performance can be successfully addressed through a remediation plan, while other such situations cannot. Problems typically become identified as impairments when one or more of the following characteristics are present:

1. the intern does not acknowledge and/or successfully address the problem when it is identified,
2. the problem is not a skill deficit that can be rectified by further academic or didactic training,
3. the quality of services delivered by the intern is negatively affected and may be considered destructive to clients,
4. the problem is not restricted to one area of professional functioning,
5. a disproportionate amount of attention by training personnel is required, compared to other interns in the group,
6. the intern's behavior does not change as a function of feedback, remediation efforts, and/or time,
7. the problematic behavior has potential for ethical or legal ramifications if it is not addressed,
8. the intern's behavior negatively impacts the public's view of the department,
9. the problematic behavior negatively impacts the intern class.

The Training Committee will consider the number and severity of the characteristics noted above when determining how to address identified impairments in functioning. The Training Committee may use either an informal or formal review when addressing identified impairments.

1. Informal Review

- a. If a supervisor believes that an intern is not performing in an appropriate/professional manner or that the intern's behavior is becoming problematic, the supervisor will address the issue directly and as soon as possible with the intern in an attempt to resolve the problem. This process will be documented in writing by the supervisor, but it will not become part of the intern's professional file.

2. Formal Review

- a. If an intern's problematic behavior persists following an attempt to resolve the issue informally, or if the intern receives less than a "3" on a broad competency domain within a supervisory evaluation, the following steps will be taken:
 - i. The intern's supervisor will meet with the Training Director and the intern within 10 working days to review the problem(s). If the Training Director is the intern's immediate supervisor, a member of the Training Committee will be included in the meeting.
 - ii. The intern will be provided with the opportunity to offer a response to the problem in writing.
 - iii. After discussing the problem and the intern's response, the supervisor and Training Director will define the trainee's problem as concretely and behaviorally as possible, decide on the severity, and assess the potential for remediation.
 - iv. The Training Director and supervisor may:
 1. issue a verbal warning,
 2. generate a remediation plan without probation,
 3. place the intern on probationary status with a remediation plan,
 4. terminate the intern from the training program.
 - v. The Training Director's and supervisor's response will be provided to the intern within 5 working days of the initial meeting. In the case of probation or termination, the intern, the intern's academic program, and other relevant persons will be notified in writing. Furthermore, as deemed necessary by the Training Director, the intern's academic program may be consulted or notified at any time regarding concerns about the intern's performance. If the intern wishes to challenge the decisions made, s/he may request to appeal the decision as outlined in the *Procedures for Appeal*.

Explanations of recommended actions:

1. A verbal warning is issued to the intern: If a remediation plan is not deemed necessary, the Training Director and supervisor may choose to issue a verbal warning to modify the problematic behavior. This consequence is primarily designed to be educational in nature and typically occurs within the context of the intern's supervision. Depending on the nature of the identified problem, the amount of supervision received might increase and/or case responsibilities may be changed.
2. A remediation plan is generated without probation: If termination or probation is not

deemed appropriate, the Training Director and supervisor will generate an appropriate plan of remediation. All remediation plans will comply with juvenile probation policies and procedures. Several possible courses of action designed to remediate deficiencies may include (but are not limited to):

- a. increasing supervision with the primary supervisor or changing the primary supervisor,
 - b. changing the format, emphasis, and/or focus of supervision,
 - c. recommending or requiring a psychological assessment and/or personal therapy, and clarifying to all parties involved whether or not the assessment and therapy contacts will be used in the intern evaluation process, and if so, how they will be used,
 - d. reducing or limiting the type of direct client contact or other internship responsibilities or increasing certain types of client contacts, if the problem behavior is related to insufficient competency,
 - e. requiring specific continuing education,
 - f. recommending, when appropriate, a leave of absence from the internship.
3. The Trainee is placed on probation with a remediation plan: Probationary status is defined as a situation where the intern is actively and systematically monitored by supervisors and the Training Director for a specific length of time regarding the necessary and expected changes in the problematic behavior. The intern is given a written statement notifying him/her of the probationary status and specifying:
- a. the behaviors which need to be changed,
 - b. the stipulations for remediating the problem,
 - c. the time period during which the problem is to be ameliorated,
 - d. the procedures designed to evaluate whether the problem has been appropriately addressed.

Following the intern's written notification of his/her probationary status, the Training Director will meet with the intern to review the probationary conditions. The intern may then choose to accept the conditions of the probation or to challenge the action. The procedures for appealing the action are presented in a subsequent section. If the action is not challenged by the intern, the remediation plan is put into action.

4. Termination is recommended: Termination from the internship program at this point in the process would be recommended only in extreme circumstances (e.g., the problem represents gross misconduct or ethical violations that have potential to cause harm). Examples of such circumstances are acts of physical aggression against a staff member or a client, or serious ethical misconduct such as a sexual relationship with a client. After the trainee is notified in writing of the recommendation, s/he may choose to appeal the decision as outlined in the ***Procedures for Appeal***.

When a remediation plan is put into action, the Training Director and supervisor will work with the intern to facilitate and monitor change over a specified period of time. If the intern demonstrates sufficient positive change, s/he will be formally notified, in writing, that satisfactory change has been accomplished. For an intern placed on probationary status demonstration of sufficient positive change will be documented in writing and the intern will be notified that the probationary period has ended. At the end of the probationary period, the intern's academic program will be notified that probationary status has been lifted. If, at the end of the probationary period, the Training Director and supervisor determine that insufficient

positive change has taken place, they will review the situation and recommend one of the following:

1. The intern remains on probation: The intern remains on probation with a new time period specified. The intern may challenge this recommendation or may accept the new remediation plan.
2. A new plan is generated: A recommendation of termination is not deemed to be appropriate at this time, and a new plan for remediation is generated in another effort to promote change. This plan may include (but is not limited to) psychological/psychiatric treatment, careful screening of clients, closer and more intense supervision, and/or suspension of certain activities.
3. Termination is recommended: The Training Director and supervisor, after reviewing the problem, conclude that it is both serious and resistant to change; on this basis, termination is recommended. Again, at this point the intern may choose to challenge the decision according to the appeal procedures outlined below. In the case of termination, the Training Director will notify APPIC and the intern's graduate program of the termination.

The trainee is notified of the final decision and, again, may appeal the decision. If the intern accepts the decision, his/her academic program and other appropriate individuals will be notified. If the trainee chooses to appeal, these individuals will be notified of the final decision at the conclusion of the appeal process.

Procedures for appeal:

Within five working days of notification of (1) remediation plan, (2) probationary status, or (3) termination, an intern may submit a letter (or email) to the Training Director requesting an appeal.

Within five working days of the receipt of the appeal request, the Training Director will request that the department's Chief Juvenile Probation Officer or his/her designee convene an Appeals Committee. The Chief Juvenile Probation Officer or his/her designee will then select the members and a Chair. The Appeals Committee will have fifteen working days to conduct a fact-finding review.

The procedures invoked for a special fact-finding review by the Appeals Committee are as follows:

1. The intern and his/her supervisor or the staff member(s) involved will be notified that a special review meeting will be held.
2. The Appeals Committee may request personal interviews and/or written statements from individuals as it deems appropriate.
3. The intern may submit to the Appeals Committee any written statements s/he believes to be appropriate, may request a personal interview, and/or may request that the Committee interview other individuals who might have relevant information. The supervisor or staff members involved will also be afforded the same privilege.

Following the fact-finding review, the Chief Juvenile Probation Officer or his/her designee will communicate a summary of the Appeals Committee's findings and any recommendations to the Training Director, within five working days of the end of their deliberation. The Appeals Committee may choose to sustain any previous actions taken or may implement a new course of

action as deemed necessary. The Appeals Committee has final discretion regarding outcome.

Intern Evaluation Procedures

The Travis County Psychology Internship Program requires that interns demonstrate minimum levels of achievement across all training competencies, as outlined in the description of the program's goals, objectives, and competencies. Interns are formally evaluated by the Training Committee twice annually, at the midpoint and end of the internship year. Evaluations are conducted using a standard rating form, which includes comment spaces where supervisors provide specific written feedback regarding the intern's performance and progress. The evaluation form includes information about the intern's performance regarding all of TC-PIP's expected training objectives and related competencies. The primary supervisor, the assessment supervisor, and the Training Director provide written feedback on the evaluation regarding areas of strength and areas for future growth. The Training Director reviews these evaluations with the interns and provides an opportunity for discussion if the intern has questions or concerns about the feedback.

A minimum level of achievement on each evaluation is defined as a rating of "3" for each competency. The rating scale for each evaluation is a 5-point Likert scale, with the following rating values: 1= Development Needed, 3= Meets Expectations, 5= Exceeds Expectations. Interns receive individual competency ratings on their evaluations as well as broad competency scores. The broad competency scores are tallied by averaging the intern's individual competency scores within each of the nine areas assessed by the program. These areas are: professional conduct and ethics; professional development; individual and cultural diversity; psychological diagnosis and assessment; effective therapeutic intervention; scholarly inquiry and application of scientific knowledge to practice; consultation, supervision and evaluation; psychology and juvenile justice; and teaching.

If an intern receives a broad competency score of less than 3 in any domain, or if supervisors have reason to be concerned about the student's performance or progress, the program's Due Process procedures will be initiated. The Due Process guidelines are outlined in the Intern Handbook and in a separate document provided to interns during orientation.

Additionally, all TC-PIP interns are expected to complete 2,000 hours of training during the internship year. Meeting this requirement and obtaining sufficient ratings on all evaluations demonstrates that the intern has progressed satisfactorily through and completed the internship program. Feedback to the intern's home doctoral program is provided at the culmination of the internship year. Doctoral programs are contacted within one month following the end of the internship year and informed that the intern has successfully completed the program. If successful completion of the program comes into question at any point during the internship year, or if an intern enters into the formal review step of the Due Process procedures due to a grievance by a supervisor or an inadequate rating on an evaluation, the home doctoral program will be contacted within 30 days. This contact is intended to ensure that the home doctoral program, which also has a vested interest in the intern's progress, is informed in order to support an intern who may be having difficulties during the internship year. The home doctoral program is notified of any further action that may be taken by TC-PIP as a result of the Due Process procedures, up to and including termination from the program.

In addition to the evaluations described above, interns must complete a self-evaluation form at the beginning and end of the internship. Additionally, interns will complete a program and

supervisor evaluation at the mid-point and end of the internship year, in order to provide feedback that will inform any changes or improvements in the training program.

Internet Policy

The Internet must be used with the understanding that all searches, movements, and transactions are monitored. Employees are not allowed to send or transmit unprofessional or offensive files. During work hours, the Internet may be used for work related tasks. During non-work hours, the Internet may be used for personal and informational purposes but employees may not access questionable sites (such as gambling, pornographic, or drug advocating), or visit chat rooms or conduct any type of business.

Telephone Supervision Policy

The Travis County Psychology Internship Program (TC-PIP) provides opportunities for Spanish-speaking interns to enhance their skills in the provision of clinical services in Spanish throughout the training year. Because the department recognizes that linguistic matching is most effective in supervision as well as treatment, TC-PIP incorporates the active involvement of an adjunct faculty member who can provide interns with supervision in Spanish as needed. This adjunct supervisor is available to provide telephonic supervision in Spanish in order to address issues that arise for interns who are providing direct services to families in Spanish. This supervision occurs in addition to rather than in lieu of regularly-scheduled supervision provided by the interns' primary supervisor. For all clinical cases discussed during telephone supervision, full professional and clinical responsibility remains with the intern's primary supervisor, and any crises or other time-sensitive issues are reported to that supervisor immediately.

TC-PIP utilizes telephone supervision to provide this additional resource to its interns. It is expected that the foundation for this supervisory relationship will be initially cultivated during TC-PIP's orientation, when interns are introduced to the adjunct faculty member. This telephone supervision occurs for one (1) hour each week at a regularly scheduled time via telephone call with the Spanish-speaking supervisor. This format is utilized to promote consistent communication opportunities with the adjunct faculty member who provides this supervision, in order to support interns' development of competency related to the linguistic and cultural components of these clinical cases. If supervision is provided to an intern in Spanish, the adjunct faculty member will also meet with the intern once per month in person. In addition, this faculty member works in collaboration with the intern and the intern's primary supervisor to provide this valuable adjunctive service.