

Chapter 12. Internship

As the culmination of clinical training, the clinical psychology program requires:

- a one-year, full-time clinical internship (or half-time over 2 years).
- that the internship be either APA- or CPA-accredited¹.

APPIC's database of sites indicates which are APA- and CPA-accredited. A list of APA-accredited internships can also be found at <http://www.apa.org/ed/accreditation>.

Competitiveness of Internships

Clinical internships have become highly competitive, especially in popular areas such as Boston and Washington, DC. Although Catholic University students have long held a strong reputation at internship settings, careful preparation of your internship application and consideration of a wide range of alternative placements is strongly encouraged. We also urge you to include internship sites outside of the immediate area and other very desirable places to live. Sites in the midwest and in small towns are not as inundated with applications as are sites in attractive urban environments. You can apply in the DC area if you would like to stay here, because our students have done extremely well in the area, but you will increase the chances of getting an internship that you are pleased with if you also plan to apply more widely. You may also keep in mind that we have a high success rate in placing students on internship in their first year of applying. As a final and important consideration, your application for clinical internships has implications for the larger program, our reputation, and the maintenance of our accreditation. Applying for internship requires that you are ready and that you make the maximum effort to ensure success. For example, some students consider applying when they are perhaps less than fully prepared or consider applying to only 1-2 sites thinking that if they do not get in, they can try again next year. This kind of approach has implications beyond the student applicant—such an approach can adversely affect the larger program if you fail to obtain an internship on a first try. If there are any questions about your readiness or strategy, please talk to your faculty advisor, the Associate DCT, or the DCT.

Preparation and Applications

Gather information about internships early. The summer before applying is a good time to collect information about sites, although the sites will typically not have their actual materials available until around September. The source for information on sites and many other aspects of internship application is the website of the Association for Psychology Postdoctoral and Internship Centers (APPIC), the professional organization of internship sites, <http://www.appic.org>. APPIC has a searchable database of internships with links to internship

¹ In extraordinary circumstances, students may petition the core clinical faculty to apply to a non APA- or CPA-accredited program. Please see the description below.

websites.

APPIC has several listservs that can be joined by going to the APPIC website. Students applying for internship must subscribe to the Match listserv because the information is essential (and yields few messages). There is also a discussion list for applicants, which some students find useful and others find anxiety-provoking and not helpful.

The Associate DCT and DCT hold a meeting each year for those who are planning to apply for internship. All facets of the application process are discussed and resources are provided. In addition, the DCT reviews drafts of all application materials and provides feedback to each student.

APPIC has an application form, the AAPI, that all sites use. It can be accessed via their website (see link above). Note that the AAPI is completed entirely online. The application includes a detailed break-down of hours spent in various clinical activities, as well as tests administered. There is also a set of essays on the AAPI. In addition to the standard AAPI, some sites have had their own set of questions in the past.

Application deadlines range from late October to December. Most are November 1, although they keep getting earlier. Give yourself time to work and re-work your internship applications. It is essential to tailor your application to each site in the final essay, and the online AAPI allows for doing so. General statements (e.g., "I want to intern at your setting because it offers the best training") are less effective than those that can detail what is unique about each internship and how it fits into your overall plan for professional development. In our experience, it can be helpful to look at other essays of peers or in books, but then be sure to put them away before writing your own. Your essays must reflect your original work and you never want to literally or inadvertently use the work of others! Be sure to ask your advisor to read all your essays and give you feedback.

High-quality internships are geared toward training, not providing service cheaply through student labor. It stands to reason, then, that the best internships consider more than just the quantity of prior clinical experience. The quality of experience and the student's demonstrated scholarship in all areas of psychology are equally or more important. Give consideration, therefore, to soliciting recommendations from advisors who may know you primarily through research collaboration or seminar work, as well as from clinical supervisors.

Some internships offer specialized training in a particular treatment modality (e.g., psychodynamic) or with a particular population (e.g., inpatients; children and adolescents; college students). Decisions about whether to do such an internship should be made in light of the student's overall training experience (pre- and post-internship) and career goals.

Readiness to Apply for Internship

Students must receive program approval prior to applying for internship. The DCT confirms program approval via an email to the student, copying their advisor. Operationally, the Director of Clinical Training will not complete the portion of the internship applications that attests to the student's readiness for internship unless the student has met these criteria and the faculty has approved the student to apply for internship.

1. At a clinical faculty meeting each fall semester, the faculty review the list of students who are interested in applying for internship for the following year, and determine whether to approve their readiness to apply. Only students who are approved may apply.
2. The following criteria are considered in the approval process:
 - a. Students are in good standing in the program. They are not on a remediation plan nor on probation.
 - b. Students are making good academic progress in the program, have passed the comprehensive examination, and have submitted their dissertation proposal to the department with committee approval by October 1 of that Fall.
 - c. Students will have completed at least two 9-month clinical externships by the time they begin internship. At least one of the two externships must provide supervised experience in administering batteries and writing integrative reports. At least two integrative assessment reports must be completed.
 - d. Students will have completed at least 450 face-to-face hours of assessment/intervention and at least 150 hours of supervision by a clinical psychologist by October 1 of the year applying.
 - e. Students have received satisfactory faculty ratings on the clinical case conference.
 - f. Students have received satisfactory faculty ratings on the assessment case conference.
 - g. Students completed requirements and met the "Minimum Levels of Achievement" for all Discipline-Specific Knowledge areas (i.e., History & Systems; Affective Aspects of Behavior; Biological Aspects of Behavior; Cognitive Aspects of Behavior; Developmental Aspects of Behavior; Social Aspects of Behavior; Advanced Integrative Knowledge of Basic Discipline-Specific Content Areas; Research Methods; Statistical Analysis; Psychometrics).
 - h. Students completed requirements and met the "Minimum Levels of Achievement" for all Profession-Wide Competencies (i.e., Research; Ethical and Legal Standards; Individual and Cultural Diversity; Professional Values, Attitudes, and Behaviors; Communications and Interpersonal Skills; Assessment; Intervention; Supervision; Consultation and Interprofessional/Interdisciplinary Skills).

- i. The sum total of the student's training experiences is deemed by faculty to have provided sufficient breadth of training to satisfy the program's and student's pre-internship goals.

The Match Process

IMPORTANT: Students cannot register for the match unless they have been formally approved by the program to register.

APPIC administers a computerized matching process of applicants and sites. In other words, after a process of applications and rank ordering, a computer program comes up with the best match of an applicant to the highest rank-ordered site possible. Applicants are told where they have matched, and sites are told who their interns will be. Information on the match can be found on the APPIC website.

Most applications are due about November 1, and interviews often take place in December and January. In Phase I of the match, both applicants and sites submit rank-ordered lists early in February. In other words, students rank-order all the sites they are willing to attend, and sites rank-order all the applicants they are willing to train. APPIC convincingly demonstrates that it is in applicants' (and sites') best interest to submit an honest rank-order list, regardless of what chance the applicant thinks he or she has of getting the top-ranked site. The Phase I match outcome is announced on a Friday in late February.

Sites are never told what rank an applicant with whom they are matched gave the site, and vice versa. In submitting a rank-order list, applicants are guaranteeing that they will attend the site to which they are matched; it is ethically unacceptable to change one's mind after the match has been announced. That is why it is so important to rank-order only those sites to which an applicant is willing to go.

Students who do not obtain a position in this first phase of the match are eligible to participate in a Phase II match. Those applicants use the AAPI Online service to submit applications to programs with unfilled positions from Phase I approximately one week after the Phase I match. Applicants and programs submit new rank order lists for Phase II of the Match by a deadline that is roughly 3 weeks after the Phase I match. A second matching process is carried out, and the results of Phase II of the match are distributed 1 week later.

Petition to Apply to non-APA or non-CPA Accredited Internships

Students in the Catholic University Clinical Psychology Training Program are required to complete an APA- or CPA- accredited clinical internship. In extraordinary circumstances, students may petition the core clinical faculty to apply to a non APA- or CPA-accredited program. The student must describe the extraordinary circumstance(s) in a letter to the faculty.

Furthermore, a student must demonstrate that the internship meets minimum standards for the internship to be an acceptable placement. Any student who wishes to apply to such an internship must submit all information necessary for the clinical faculty to evaluate the internship's acceptability, such as the description of the training and the list of faculty. This must be done at least 4 weeks prior to potentially applying to the internship.

In order to assure the quality of training, the following guidelines serve as minimum standards for non-APA and non-CPA accredited internship programs. Any internship that fails to meet these guidelines will not qualify as an acceptable training experience for Catholic University clinical psychology students. The guidelines are not meant to suggest what constitutes a good internship program, merely a minimally acceptable one. An attempt is made to specify certain features which we feel are essential, as well as other features which may be desirable but not absolutely necessary.

1. The student must be clearly designated as a trainee in a formally identified training program, in contrast to being hired as a junior staff member of the facility itself.
2. The program must have a licensed/certified psychologist (Ph.D. or Psy.D.) who functions as training director and who is responsible for the following:
 - a) establishing a contract with the trainee regarding the content of the training program. This contract should take into account the trainee's specific skills and deficits. It should specify a set of required training experiences (number of hours of direct client contact, seminars, conferences, etc.), and a set of elective training experiences.
 - b) insuring that the trainee's program is evaluated periodically, so that the training program can be modified, if necessary.
 - c) insuring that mid-year and end-of-year evaluations are made of the trainee's skills and deficits as a clinical psychologist and that these are sent to the Catholic University Director of Clinical Training.
3. The trainee must receive broad exposure to a reasonable variety of significant clinical problems. It is difficult to specify in advance just what constitutes "broad exposure" or "significant problems." For example, exclusive contact with just one of the following problem groups would constitute too restricted a training experience: an incarcerated prison population, or a chemically dependent sample (even if both in-patient and out-patient). The internship facility itself could provide direct service only to a limited clientele, as in the case of a prison. However, the training director will be responsible for providing supplementary training experiences at outside training agencies, in order to insure broad exposure to diverse problems as well.
4. It is desirable that the trainee gain experience in a wide variety of treatment

modalities, such as individual, group, marital/family, long-term, short-term inpatient and outpatient treatment. Moreover, it is desirable that the trainee receive exposure to a variety of theoretical approaches to treatment (e.g., cognitive-behavioral, psychodynamic). However, exposure to a variety of treatment modes and models does not substitute for experience with a broad client population.

5. The trainee's internship experiences should represent a reasonable balance of activities undertaken by a clinical psychologist, including direct treatment, consultation, assessment, and research. Formal seminars and case conferences are also desirable components of the training year.

6. Adequate supervision time must be allocated for all training activities in which the intern is engaged. This supervision must be provided by two or more licensed/certified psychologists (Ph.D. or Psy.D.) on the training program staff. Total supervision time should amount to at least 5 or 6 hours per week, at least 2 hours of which should constitute individual supervision by a licensed/certified staff psychologist. In addition, it is desirable that the trainee receive some consultation with, and/or supervision by, other mental health professionals, in order to foster a multidisciplinary perspective.

7. Meet all requirements of Implementing Regulation C-17 D (Expected Internship Placements for Students in Accredited Doctoral Programs). This includes providing “evidence demonstrating quality and adequacy of the internship experience. This must include information on the following: i. the nature and appropriateness of the training activities; ii. frequency and quality of supervision; iii. credentials of the supervisors; iv. how the internship evaluates student performance; v. how interns demonstrate competency at the appropriate level; vi. documentation of the evaluation of its students in its student files.”

Very important: *Students in the Catholic University Clinical Psychology Doctoral Program are required to complete an APA- or CPA- accredited clinical internship.* In extraordinary circumstances, students may petition the core clinical faculty to apply to a non APA- or CPA-accredited program. It is important to know that some future employers (like the VA system) may *require* an APA accredited internship experience. Also, if you complete an unaccredited internship, you may be asked by the jurisdiction in which you seek licensing to provide voluminous documentation on the hours you spent on internship. Track your hours just as you did earlier in the program in preparation for internship application, e.g., by how many face-to-face hours with what type of client, and so on. This is a website for investigating the rules about internship in different jurisdictions: <http://www.asppb.net/> (general information on licensing requirements and specific licensing requirements of every jurisdiction in the US and Canada)