



## 2017 CDSPP Doctoral Internship Guidelines

Initial guidelines approved by the membership, May, 1998  
Revision guidelines approved by the membership, November, 2012  
Current guidelines approved by the membership, June, 2017

The doctoral internship is the culminating professional practice experience in doctoral-level health service psychology. The following includes guidelines that characterize high quality doctoral school psychology internship experiences, consistent with *American Psychological Association (APA) Standards of Accreditation for Health Service Psychology (SoA)*<sup>1</sup> and the School Psychology Specialty.

Although these guidelines set forth basic quality standards, *specific* internship requirements for licensure and certification are established at the state level and do vary by state and jurisdiction. Therefore, graduate students **should consult relevant state licensure and certification requirements when considering the suitability of a particular internship.**

CDSPP is an organization of doctoral-level school psychology programs that is committed to training school psychologists as health service psychologists. CDSPP is not an official accrediting body and does not evaluate, approve, or accredit internships or training programs. CDSPP guidelines may be useful for prospective interns who must evaluate the quality of a school psychology doctoral internship, and for doctoral training programs that must make program development and internship approval decisions. These guidelines may also be used by organizations authorized to approve or accredit internships or training programs. Doctoral training programs and internship sites that are interested in accreditation by the American Psychological Association should refer to the *SoA* published by the APA Office of Program Consultation and Accreditation.

In the absence of special circumstances, a doctoral internship program in school psychology that meets these guidelines will also be considered as meeting current *Guidelines for Defining an Internship or Organized Health Service Training Program in Psychology* as developed by the National Register of Health Service Providers in Psychology to identify an acceptable internship, which is one of several requirements for credentialing by The National Register of Health Service Providers in Psychology.

1. A school psychology doctoral internship is an organized training program designed to provide an intern with a planned sequence of training experiences that will develop the intern's

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<sup>1</sup> The *Standards of Accreditation for Health Service Psychology (SoA)* were approved in 2015 and took effect in January 2017. The *SoA* and associated *Implementing Regulations (IRs)* are available from the American Psychological Association Office of Program Consultation and Accreditation ([www.apa.org](http://www.apa.org)).

profession wide competencies in health service psychology and the specialty of school psychology.

The internship is the culminating (i.e., completed after a programmed sequence of coursework, practica, and field experiences), supervised training experience prior to the granting of a degree by a doctoral program. Consistent with the definition of health service psychology (i.e., the integration of psychological science and practice in order to facilitate human development and functioning), the internship consists of a range of activities promoting the development of the following profession-wide competencies<sup>2</sup>:

- research;
- ethical and legal standards;
- individual and cultural diversity;
- professional values, attitudes, and behaviors;
- communication and interpersonal skills;
- assessment;
- intervention;
- supervision;
- consultation and interprofessional/interdisciplinary skills.

2. The intern, whether full-time or part-time, spends at least 25% of his or her time in providing direct (face-to-face) psychological services to clients, patients or consultees, such as teachers or other mental health service providers, which translates to a minimum of 375 hours out of 1500 doctoral internship hours.<sup>3</sup> The intern engages in research activity which includes the evaluation of services delivered and the effectiveness of the intern's own training.

3. The internship program must provide prospective interns with a dated written statement, brochure, or website that clearly states the aims, activities, and any requirements of the doctoral internship program, the supervision and supplemental training activities (e.g., learning experiences) provided, and clear expectations for the quality of interns' work. The internship program, doctoral program, and intern must jointly approve in writing the goals and content of the internship, including clearly stated expectations for the nature of experiences offered by the internship program, the quantity and quality of the work, intern salary, benefits, reimbursable travel, holidays, and other relevant internship policies.

Internship program due process procedures are made available to interns prior to the beginning of the training period. If due process procedures are initiated as a result of intern behaviors, intern activities, or internship conditions, the supervisor of the internship program will notify the intern's doctoral program.

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<sup>2</sup> This listing identifies the profession-wide competencies required for all students who graduate from APA accredited programs in health service psychology. (SoA, 2015).

<sup>3</sup> These specific guidelines are consistent with requirements established by the National Register. <https://www.nationalregister.org/apply/credentialing-requirements/>

4. Interns will minimally receive a formal, written evaluation at the end of the doctoral program's semester, trimester, or quarter course grading period. The internship program and doctoral program will agree in advance upon the format of the internship evaluation, which should in part be based on direct observation. The evaluated areas will be consistent with the doctoral program's aims and address intern development of profession-wide competencies.

Although the internship supervisor evaluates student performance during the internship year, the doctoral program is ultimately responsible for the determination of the student's readiness for graduation and entrance into the profession. Therefore, communication between doctoral programs and internship programs is of critical importance to the overall development of competent health service psychologists.

5. Full-time internships are completed in no less than 10 months; part-time internships may extend to no more than 24 months. The internship includes a minimum of 1,500 hours in activities described above. Interns should consult relevant credentialing (e.g., state licensure and certification) requirements to determine the number of internship hours required for licensure and other desired credentials. In addition, the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) has established requirements for internship (e.g., completion of at least 600 hours in a school setting). For more information, consult the relevant NASP standards and credentialing documents.

6. The doctoral internship program issues to the intern written documentation (e.g., a certificate or letter) reflecting successful completion of a doctoral level internship in health service psychology.

7. The internship program employs a clearly designated doctoral-level psychologist, who: (a) is currently licensed by the state regulatory board of psychology to practice at the independent level and (b) is responsible for the integrity and quality of the internship program.

The internship program has at least two psychologists on staff available as supervisors for the intern. The intern's primary supervisor must be actively licensed as a psychologist by the state regulatory board of psychology. Internship programs such as school districts that have the capacity for only one staff psychologist may meet the spirit of this criterion (breadth of training experience) by entering into *formal internship* agreements with other entities, such as other school districts, clinics, or university doctoral programs.

8. The full-time internship includes **at least two hours per week of regularly scheduled individual supervision by a doctoral level psychologist licensed for practice at the independent level.** The primary supervisor must directly observe the intern with the specific intent of evaluating the intern's clinical deportment and skills in psychological service delivery, and providing formative and summative feedback to the intern and university program. An internship program that does not permit live observation or audio-video recording by policy should not be approved under these guidelines.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Direct observation of the intern by the intern's primary supervisor is consistent with SoA Standard II.B.3.d. Additional information including relevant Implementing Regulations is available from the APA Office of Program Consultation and Accreditation ([www.apa.org](http://www.apa.org)).

9. In addition to the individual supervision (as described in #8 above), the intern spends **at least two additional hours per week in scheduled group or individual supervision conducted** by an appropriately credentialed health service provider (e.g., doctoral level psychologist, credentialed school psychologist, etc.).

The intern has regularly scheduled, supervised, and documented training activities with other doctoral psychology interns such as professional development/in-service training; case conferences involving a case in which an intern is actively involved; seminars dealing with professional issues; or observing delivery of health, educational, and/or child/adolescent services. These activities may be in conjunction with appropriately credentialed professionals other than school psychologists.

10. The internship program has two or more interns engaged in training at the same time. However, agencies having the capacity for only one intern may meet the spirit of this criterion (i.e., the socialization of doctoral-level psychology interns) by having regularly scheduled and documented training activities with psychology interns at other sites in the immediate geographic area or, when internship sites are at a significant distance from each other, by making arrangements for regularly scheduled meetings of interns for several hours on at least a monthly basis.

11. Internship supervision may be provided through synchronous audio and video format where the supervisor is not in the same physical facility as the intern. Supervision through electronic means may not account for more than one hour (50%) of the minimum required two weekly hours of individual supervision (as described in # 8 above), and two hours (50%) of the minimum required four total weekly hours of supervision (as described in #8 and #9 above). The use of telesupervision should be consistent with the program's overall model and philosophy of training, with assurance that relationships between supervisors and trainees are established prior to engaging in telesupervision. Programs utilizing any form of telesupervision have a formal policy that includes procedures to address issues of non-scheduled consultation, crisis coverage, and handling of privacy and confidentiality. These policies and procedures are established in advance and shared among the training program, the internship site, and the intern(s). Internships using telesupervision adhere to best practices and ethical, legal, and professional guidelines.

12. Reports and documents prepared by the doctoral intern for consumers, other agency or school personnel, or other relevant publics are co-signed by the licensed psychologist supervisor for the intern.

13. The intern has a title such as "intern," "resident," or other designation of trainee status regardless of pay grade or temporary licensure status, etc. Interns who hold other relevant credentials (e.g., National Certified School Psychologist, NCSP) may include this information as long as it is accompanied by recognition of his or her doctoral intern status.