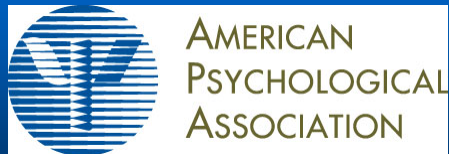


Accreditation 101: Everything Graduate Students and Interns Want to Know About Accreditation



Presented by:

Eric VandeVoorde, CoA Student Member

Betsy Horrocks, Office of Program Consultation and Accreditation

What is Accreditation?

Accreditation is both a status and a process.

- As a status, accreditation provides public notification that an institution or program meets standards of quality set forth by an accrediting agency.
- As a process, accreditation reflects the fact that in achieving recognition by the accrediting agency, the institution or program is committed to self-study and external review by one's peers in seeking not only to meet standards but to continuously seek ways in which to enhance the quality of education and training provided.

Accreditation is a Voluntary Internal (Self-Study) and External (CoA/Site Visit) Evaluation in order to:

- **Protect public interest**
- **Improve quality of programs**
- **Publicly recognize quality programs**
- **Foster innovation in education and training**

Types of Accreditors

- **Regional Accreditors**
 - Operate in six specific clusters of states (regions) in the United States and review entire institutions.
- **National Accreditors**
 - Faith based - 4 accrediting bodies
 - Private Career Accrediting bodies -7 accrediting bodies
- **Programmatic Accreditors (Specialized and Professional)**
 - 65 accrediting bodies
 - Professional accreditors include medicine, dentistry, nursing, law, psychology;

Who monitors the accreditors?

- US Secretary of the United States;
 - Standards for approval of accrediting bodies are part of the Higher Educational Authorization Act;
- Council for Higher Education Accreditation or CHEA
 - Non-profit group of higher education administrators representing institutions - formed to approve the quality of accreditors;
 - Standards are more flexible and linked to the institutional and/or program's mission;

Why APA Accreditation Matters

- Quality Assurance
 - Accredited programs must provide organized, sequential training curricula, qualified faculty, appropriate supervision, adequate resources, and public information about all aspects of training.

● Licensure

- Many states require licensure candidates to either have a degree from an APA-accredited doctoral program or prove that their program is equivalent.
- Likewise, some state laws require licensure candidates to have attended an APA-accredited internship.
- A handful of states have strict APA-specific requirements (e.g. Florida, Mississippi, Oklahoma, Utah).
- Visit <http://www.asppb.org/HandbookPublic/handbookreview.aspx> for a state-by-state listing of licensing requirements.

● Employment

- Many employers prefer psychologists who interned at an accredited site and graduated from an accredited program.
 - Academic jobs at professional psychology programs
 - Positions on competitive managed-care panels.
- Some employers require that psychologists graduated from an accredited program (e.g. Department of Veterans Affairs).

Commission on Accreditation (CoA) *(formerly the Committee on Accreditation)*

Historical Highlights

- 1945: VA requests a list of universities from the APA that are “approved” for education in psychology.
- 1947: Committee on Training in Clinical Psychology establishes first accreditation standards and criteria.
- 1948: First accreditation of doctoral programs in Clinical Psychology.
- 1953: First accreditation of doctoral programs in Counseling Psychology.
- 1956: First accreditation of Predoctoral Psychology Internships.
- 1971: First accreditation of doctoral programs in School Psychology.

- 1977: First accreditation of PsyD programs.
- 1991: 21-member Committee on Accreditation established **(including a graduate student member)**.
- 1997: First Postdoctoral Residencies accredited.
- 2008: 32-member Commission on Accreditation in place.



2006 Committee on Accreditation

Current CoA Stakeholders

- Graduate Departments of Psychology/ COGDOP (4 seats)
- APS/BSA (1 seat)
- BEA/NCSPP (1 seat)
- Clinical Psychology/ CUDCP (2 seats)
- Academy of Clinical Science (1 seat)
- Counseling Psychology/ CCPTP (2 seats)
- School Psychology/ CDSPP (2 seats)
- NCSPP (2 seats)
- Postdoctoral and Internship Centers (total - 6 seats)
 - APPIC (3 seats)
 - Internships – not specified (2 seats)
 - Postdoctoral residencies – not specified (1 seat)
- Professional Practice/ BPA, CAPP (4 seats)
- General Public (2 seats)
- CoS (1 seat)
- **Graduate Students of Psychology/ APAGS (1 seat)**
- Open Seats (2 seats)
- Individual and cultural diversity (1 seat)

=Total of 32 seats

SCOPE OF APA ACCREDITATION

- Doctoral Training Programs in substantive professional areas:
 - Clinical, Counseling and School
 - Other Developed Practice Areas
 - Combinations of 2 or 3 of the above areas
- Pre-doctoral Internship Programs in Professional Psychology (10, 12, 24 Months).
- Post-Doctoral Residencies in specialized and general fields of professional psychology.

Accredited Programs (As of May 6, 2008)

| | | |
|-----------------------|-------------------|--|
| ● Doctoral | 377 | * Breakdown by area: 235 Clinical 72 Counseling 60 School 10 Combined |
| ● Internship | 472 | |
| ● Postdoctoral | *49 | *26 Traditional Area *specialty areas 12 Clinical Neuropsychology 6 Clinical Health 1 Rehabilitation Psychology 4 Clinical Child Psychology |
| ● TOTAL | <u>898</u> | |

GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF ACCREDITATION

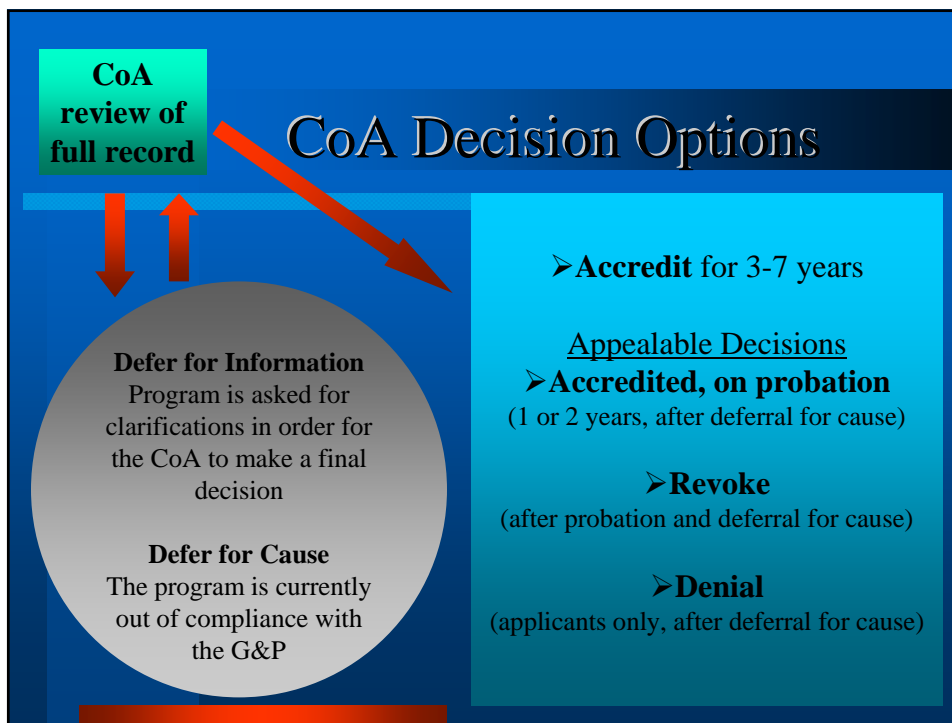
- Broad and general preparation for entry level practice;
- Integration of science and practice;
- Evaluation in light of program's own education and training model, providing this model is consistent with:
 - Principles generally accepted as appropriate to the profession;
 - The mission, goals and objectives of the sponsor institution or agency;
 - Local, regional and/or national needs; and
 - The evolving knowledge base of the area of emphasis in professional psychology for which the program prepares its students.

OUTCOME ORIENTED EVALUATION PROCESS

- The clarity, consistency, and appropriateness of institutional or program goals and objectives;
- The quality of education and training outcomes in relation to these goals/objectives;
- The ability of a program actually to achieve its goals/objectives; and
- The likelihood that such outcomes can be consistently maintained.

OVERVIEW OF ACCREDITATION OPERATION PROCEDURES

- Program application for initial/periodic CoA review;
- Submission of the Self-Study following provided outline and instructions;
- Preliminary review of self-study and feedback to program;
- Decision Re: Site visit and selection of site visitors;
- Site visit;
- Site visit report and program response;
- CoA review.



Guidelines and Principles

for Accreditation of Programs in Professional Psychology

Available on the
APA
Accreditation
website



<http://www.apa.org/ed/accreditation/G&P0522.pdf>

OVERVIEW OF ACCREDITATION DOMAINS

- A. Eligibility of Program and Setting
- B. Program Philosophy, Objectives, Curriculum Plan
- C. Program Resources
- D. Cultural and Individual Differences and Diversity
- E. Student-Faculty Relations
- F. Program Self-Assessment and Quality Enhancement
- G. Public Disclosure
- H. Relationship with Accrediting Body

Domain A **ELIGIBILITY**

Highlights:

- Program sponsored by an institution of higher education that is accredited by a nationally recognized regional accrediting body in the U.S.
- Program engages in actions that indicate respect for and understanding of cultural and individual diversity.
- Formal written policies are available concerning:
 - Admissions and degree requirements;
 - Financial and administrative assistance;
 - Student performance evaluation, feedback, advisement, retention & termination decisions; and
 - Due process and grievance procedures for students and faculty.

Domain B **PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY, OBJECTIVES, AND CURRICULUM**

Highlights:

- Program specifies objectives in terms of competencies expected of graduates.
- The curriculum provides competence in the following areas:
 - (a) The breadth of scientific psychology including:
 - Biological aspects
 - Cognitive & affective aspects
 - Social aspects
 - History and systems
 - Psychological measurement
 - Research methodology
 - Techniques of data analysis

Domain B (continued)

(b) Foundations of practice in the program's substantive area including:

- Individual differences;
- Human development;
- Dysfunctional behavior/psychopathology;
- Professional standards and ethics.

(c) Diagnosing or defining problems through assessment and implementing intervention strategies including:

- Theories and methods of assessment and diagnosis
- Effective intervention;
- Consultation and supervision;
- Evaluating the efficacy of interventions;

Domain B (continued)

(d) Issues of cultural and individual diversity relevant to all of the above.

(e) Attitudes essential for life-long learning, scholarly inquiry, and professional problem-solving in the context of an evolving body of scientific and professional knowledge.

- Program requires adequate and appropriate practicum experiences.

Domain C

PROGRAM RESOURCES

Highlights:

- Program has an identifiable core faculty who:
 - Are sufficient in number for the necessary academic responsibilities;
 - Are available and function as role models for students.

- Program has a body of students at different levels of matriculation who:
 - Are sufficient in number for meaningful peer interaction and socialization;
 - Reflect through their intended careers and professional development the program's philosophy, goals, and objectives.

Domain C (continued)

- Program has additional resources to accomplish its goals and objectives including:
 - Financial support;
 - Clerical and technical support;
 - Training materials and equipment;
 - Physical facilities;
 - Student support services; and,
 - Access to or control over practicum training sites appropriate to the program's training model, goals, and objectives.

Domain D

CULTURAL AND INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES AND DIVERSITY

Highlights:

- Has made systematic and long-term *efforts* to attract and retain students and faculty from differing ethnic, racial, and personal backgrounds including but not limited to: age, national origin, disabilities, race, ethnicity, religion, gender, culture, gender identity, sexual orientation, language, and social economic status (Domain A.5).
- Program has a *thoughtful* and *coherent plan* to provide students with relevant knowledge and experiences about the role of individual and cultural diversity in psychological science and practice.

Domain E

STUDENT-FACULTY (INTERN-STAFF) RELATIONS

Highlights:

- The program:
 - Recognizes the rights of students and faculty to be treated with courtesy, respect, collegiality, and ethical sensitivity;
 - Informs students of these principles and of their avenues of recourse should issues arise.
- Faculty members are accessible to students, provide guidance and supervision that encourages timely completion, and serve as role models.
- Respect for cultural and individual diversity is demonstrated in accordance with the definition of cultural and individual diversity in Domain A5.

Domain E (continued)

- Upon admission, students are given written policies and procedures regarding requirements, expected performance, program continuance, and termination procedures.
- Students receive, at least annually, written feedback on the extent to which they are meeting the program's requirements and expectations including:
- Programs keep records of all formal complaints and grievances filed since the last accreditation site visit and make these available as part of the CoA's periodic reviews.

Domain F

PROGRAM SELF-ASSESSMENT & QUALITY ENHANCEMENT

Highlights:

- With appropriate involvement of students, the program engages in regular, ongoing self-studies that address:
 - a. Its effectiveness in achieving goals and objectives in terms of outcome data;
 - b. How its goals and objectives are met through the program's educational and training processes; and,
 - c. Its procedures to maintain current achievements or to make program changes as necessary.

Domain G **PUBLIC DISCLOSURE**

Highlights:

- Public information is presented in a manner that allows applicants to make informed decisions about entering the program.
- Program describes itself accurately and completely in documents available to current and prospective students and other “publics”.

Domain H **RELATIONSHIP WITH THE ACCREDITING BODY**

Highlights:

- Program abides by the CoA’s published policies and procedures.
- Program informs the CoA in a timely manner of changes in its environment, plans, resources, and operations that could affect program quality.

Accreditation Operating Procedures

Available on the
APA
Accreditation
website



<http://www.apa.org/ed/oprtgprcd.pdf>

AOP 6.1

Complaint Against an Accredited Program

- Procedures for complaints against accredited programs are intended to deal only with complaints based on purported lack of program consistency with the G&P.
- Complaints must be filed in writing within 1 year of alleged noncompliance. **For students, interns, or post-doctoral fellows, complaints must be filed in writing within 18 months of leaving their program.**

Policy Statements and Implementing Regulations

Available on the
APA
Accreditation
website



<http://www.apa.org/ed/accreditation/implementregs200524.pdf>

Public Accountability Information

- Implementing Regulation (IR) C-20 states that all doctoral programs are now required to report licensure rates for graduates in addition to information on time to program completion; costs (tuition and fees); internship acceptance rates; and student attrition rates.

This information must be accessible in the program's public materials, including the website.

Get Involved with Accreditation

- Know your program's model, goals, and objectives.
- Know the program/institution policies and procedures that impact students.
- Learn how your program has addressed:
 - Domain E.1
 - Domain F.1

Office of Program Consultation and Accreditation

- Office Phone: **(202) 336-5979**
- Office Fax: **(202) 336-5978**
- Web Address:
<http://www.apa.org/ed/accreditation>