

Committee on Accreditation 2004 Survey about the Guidelines and Principles for Graduate Training in Professional Psychology

BACKGROUND

In order for the APA Office of Program Consultation and Accreditation to meet the Department of Education's criteria for the recognition of accrediting agencies, as well as satisfy an internal assessment of its own accrediting activities, the current survey was undertaken to determine the importance of hiring or credentialing psychologists that come from doctoral, internship, or postdoctoral programs that meet specific characteristics/domains. These characteristics were taken from the *Guidelines and Principles for Accreditation of Programs in Professional Psychology (G&P)*.

The current study represents the second survey effort to obtain the opinions of those who might hire or credential psychologists. In 2000, 200 chairs of undergraduate and graduate departments of psychology along with a sample of 100 APA members were asked to complete a doctoral instrument. The APA members were identified as psychologists employed in organized health care settings and who were primarily administrators or managers and whose field of degree or current major field was a practice subfield. Overall, 187 individuals completed the hardcopy survey, yielding an overall response rate of 62.3%. In addition, an internship instrument was sent to a similar sample of 200 APA members. A total of 149 internship hardcopy surveys were submitted for a response rate of 74.5%. Comparisons between the 2000 study and current study are not included in the report due to the differences in survey methodologies. Mean ratings on the importance of the specific characteristics for the current study are highlighted below.

The study represents a collaborative effort between the APA Research Office and APA Office of Program Consultation and Accreditation. Survey results will be provided in aggregate form to the Committee on Accreditation (CoA), Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA), the Department of Education, and the public.

METHOD

Instrument. Individuals, who might hire or credential psychologists, were asked to rate and provide feedback on specific characteristics/domains. The wording of the survey was taken from parts of the *Guidelines and Principles for Accreditation of Programs in Professional Psychology (G&P)*. The characteristics were presented as closed-ended questions, and respondents were asked to rate the importance of these for doctoral, internship, and postdoctoral programs. They were given a 5-point scale with which to indicate their opinions. The scale ranged from 1 for "extremely unimportant" to 5 for "extremely important". In addition, an open-ended item was provided at the end of the first section to afford respondents the opportunity to make any comments.

Sampling and Procedure. In April 2004, surveys were sent to various businesses that employ psychologists and psychology credentialing boards and organizations that represent education and training in psychology. More specifically, a sample of chairs of undergraduate and graduate departments of psychology, and practitioners' places of employment and consulting firms comprised the sample. In addition, a survey solicitation was broadcasted on a number of listservs to gather further input.

Two hundred chairs belonging to US graduate departments of psychology with a health service provider component were selected. All other variables were allowed to vary. The chairs were sent an email describing the purpose of the online survey and were provided with a URL. Two weeks after the initial email, a reminder email was distributed to those who had not completed the survey. For the final request, a hardcopy survey was mailed out to the chairs another two weeks after the reminder.

Another 400 chairs of US undergraduate departments of psychology were included in the sample. Those chairs with full mailing address details were sent a hardcopy survey in the mail. Three weeks after the initial mailing, a postcard reminder was sent to the non-respondents. Another three weeks later, a postcard with a URL to the online survey was mailed to the chairs.

One hundred sixty-nine businesses were selected from APA members (identified as practitioners) and their places of employment (excluding private practice and self employed settings). In addition, 31 consulting firms were contacted to participate in the survey. Hardcopy surveys were mailed to the Human Resources at each of the businesses. Postcard reminders were mailed to non-respondents three weeks after the first wave. A postcard with a URL to the online survey was sent out another three weeks later.

Listserv administrators of various divisions and organizations related to Council of Credentialing Organizations in Professional Psychology (CCOPP) and Council of Chairs of Training Councils (CCTC) were asked to distribute to their members a solicitation to participate in the online survey. There were two email broadcasts two weeks apart.

Response rate. Four hundred and fifty-six individuals responded to the survey. Eighty-seven graduate and 69 undergraduate department chairs completed a survey, yielding an overall response rate of 46.3% and 17.3%, respectively. Out of the 200 businesses surveyed, a total of 23 responded to the survey for a response rate of 12.0%. Another 248 individuals completed the survey in response to the listserv emails.

CAVEATS

This report contains sample statistics, not population estimates. That is, the data represent only those individuals who responded to the survey, and therefore, inferences about non-respondents based on the survey results cannot be made. The closed-ended tables include counts and means of respondents who provided information on a specific characteristic or question. Although the means for several characteristics are reasonably accurate, readers of this report should consider possible error that may be introduced by non-response.

FINDINGS

Respondents rated the importance of each characteristic along a 5-point scale, where 1 = “extremely unimportant” and 5 = “extremely important”. Mean ratings on the importance of the specific characteristics for doctoral, internship, and postdoctoral programs are included in Tables 1-4.

Doctoral

Overall, the mean ratings for the characteristics for doctoral programs were greater than 4. The highest mean rating was provided for A., housed in an institution appropriate for psychology training (4.54). Respondents also viewed B4., competence in the scientific, methodological and theoretical foundations of practice; C., adequate faculty, students and resources; and G.,

accurately represents itself to the public (4.46 each) in positive terms. The characteristics receiving the lowest mean ratings related to D., "recruitment and retention of diverse faculty and students" (4.06), followed by F., "a demonstrated commitment to excellence through self-study" (4.18).

Internship

With the exception of the rating for B3., the mean ratings for the characteristics for internship programs were also 4 or higher. The characteristics related to G., accurate representation to the public; A., housed in an institution appropriate for psychology training; and H., abided by accreditation policies, received the highest mean ratings (4.45, 4.42 and 4.40, respectively). Lowest mean ratings were provided for B3., competence in the breadth of scientific psychology, history and research methods (3.76) and D., recruited and retained diverse faculty and students (4.01).

Postdoctoral

The mean ratings for postdoctoral domains ranged from 3.64 to 4.38. The highest mean ratings were observed for G., accurate representation to the public (4.38); C., adequate faculty, students and resources (4.21); and E., mutual respect between faculty and students (4.21). Conversely, B3., competence in the breadth of scientific psychology, history and research methods (3.64) and D., recruited and retained diverse faculty and students (3.80) received the lowest mean ratings.