Discussing the Unique Challenges, Requirements, and Rewards of Postdoctoral Training

2008 Accreditation Assembly
Minneapolis
May 30-31, 2008
Evidence-Based Outcomes: Assessing Achievement of Educational Goals, Objectives, and Competencies

Presenters

- Jeanette Hsu, Ph.D.
  - Director of Training, Psychology Service, VA Palo Alto Health Care System; Vice Chair, APPIC Board

- Brad L. Roper, Ph.D., ABPP
  - Director, Neuropsychology Program and Director of Neuropsychology Fellowship Training, Memphis VAMC; CoA Member; Vice President, Association of Postdoctoral Programs in Clinical Neuropsychology
Presenters

- Richard Seime, Ph.D., ABPP
  - Coordinator, Clinical Health Psychology Postdoctoral Program, Mayo Clinic Medical Psychology Fellowship, Department of Psychiatry and Psychology; CoA Member

Outline

- Introduction and Update—Rick
- Specialization Issues—Brad
- VA Expansion, Uniform Notification Date/APPCN Match, Clinical/Research Mix in Postdoctoral Training—Jeanette
- Challenges and Rewards—Rick
- Discussion and Ideas—ALL
Update on Postdoctoral Training

- Approved by APA Commission on Accreditation—
  - Postdoctoral residencies may be accredited as programs preparing individuals for practice at an advanced level in the traditional practice areas of Clinical, Counseling, or School Psychology.

Update on Postdoctoral Training

- Postdoctoral residencies may also be accredited in specialty practice areas. Those specialty areas that have met the guidelines to be included in the scope of accreditation are as follows:
  - Clinical Child Psychology
  - Clinical Health Psychology
  - Clinical Neuropsychology
  - Family Psychology
  - Forensic Psychology
  - Rehabilitation Psychology
Update on Postdoctoral Training

Accredited Postdoctoral Programs

- 26 Traditional Practice Programs - 5 are part of integrated practice program
  - 6 with in-depth training in specialty practice area of clinical neuropsychology
  - 2 with in-depth training in specialty practice area of clinical child psychology

- 23 Specialty Practice Programs
  - 4 Clinical Child Psychology - 3 are part of integrated practice program
  - 6 Clinical Health Psychology - 1 is part of an integrated practice program
  - 12 Clinical Neuropsychology - 7 are part of an integrated practice program
  - 1 Rehabilitation Psychology
Update on Postdoctoral Training

Accredited Postdoctoral Programs

- 7 Integrated Practice Programs
  - 2 clinical child psychology and clinical neuropsychology
  - 4 clinical psychology and clinical neuropsychology
  - 1 clinical child psychology, clinical health psychology, and clinical neuropsychology

APPIC Postdoctoral Programs

- 108 member programs/ 30 accredited

APPIC 2007-2008 Mean Salary Data

- Accredited programs - $41,600
- Non-accredited programs - $33,300
- VA (with locality variations) - $43,039
- Military - $55,000
Postdoctoral Training Arena

- Training ranges from informal clinical positions, informal and formal research postdocs, to postdoctoral programs preparing for advanced practice in traditional or specialty practice areas.
- There is not the sense of shared expectations or agreed upon conventions as at internship level of training.

Postdoc Funding

- CMS funding— from the Allied Health Professional Training funds—not GME funding—must be accredited program
  - 3 postdoc training sites currently have funding- Hurley Medical Center (Stucky); UT Galveston (Baker), Rehab Institute of Michigan (Hanks)
- VA Expansion
Issue

- Traditional, Specialty, and Integrated Practice postdoctoral programs.

Specialty Postdocs

- Specialties Currently Accreditable:
  - Clinical Child Psychology
  - Clinical Health Psychology
  - Clinical Neuropsychology
  - Family Psychology (added April 2008)
  - Forensic Psychology (added April 2008)
  - Rehabilitation Psychology
How Specialties Become Accreditable

- Following IR C-11(b), the specialty must:
  1. Be recognized as a specialty by the Commission on the Recognition of Specialties and Proficiencies in Professional Psychology (CRSPPP) of APA or by ABPP, and
  2. Hold membership in the Council of Specialties (CoA), and
  3. Provide the CoA with specialty-specific postdoctoral education and training guidelines endorsed by the CoS.

How do I keep up with new specialty guidelines?

- As CoA receives new guidelines from CoS, the name of the specialty is added to the list of accreditable specialties on the CoA website.
- Specialty guidelines endorsed by CoS are available through CoS.
- CoA does not critically review specialty guidelines received from CoS.
How Specialty Postdocs are Reviewed by CoA

- Accreditation decisions made based on the program’s compliance with the G&P and the postdoctoral training guidelines of the designated specialty area.
- One site visitor has expertise in the specialty practice area.

Integrated Practice Programs

- Combinations of two or more traditional and/or specialty practice programs (note the plural).
- Prepare a single self-study, with separate sections as needed (e.g., Domains B, C, and F).
- CoA’s accreditation decisions are program-based, and thus can differ across programs.
Emphasis Areas within a Traditional Program

- Traditional or specialty areas may offer training in areas of emphasis.
- Areas of emphasis are not considered specialties and do not have to meet the requirements of IR C-11(b).
- Areas of emphasis may be described in all public materials except certificates of completion.

Integrated Practice Programs vs. Emphasis Areas within one Program

- The existence of accreditable specialty training guidelines does not eliminate use of the same term as an emphasis area within a traditional program.
- Strictly speaking, training sites may choose either option, if specialty guidelines exist.
- However, generally speaking, we recommend that programs choose the option that best fits their program.
Expansion of postdoctoral training in VA in 2007
Uniform Notification Date for postdoctoral offers
APPCN Match
Research activity and accreditation

VA is largest single employer of psychologists in the world. Current total is approximately 2,300.
VA’s Office of Mental Health Services estimates that the optimal number of psychologists is 3,700.
In 2007, VA expanded funding for postdoctoral training, awarding 98 new postdoctoral fellowship programs
- 61 positions in 26 new programs
- 37 positions in 17 existing programs
Expansion of Postdoctoral Funding by VA

- New positions added 20% to total APPIC postdoctoral positions, and 95% to total VA postdoctoral positions.
- VA constitutes 30% of total APPIC postdoctoral positions (~577 total positions in 2007)
- VA’s Office of Academic Affiliations requires that new postdoctoral programs become accredited in order to maintain their funding.
  - May entail need for additional site visitors.

Brief History of Uniform Notification Date (UND)

- 1990s – 9 VA geropsychology postdoctoral programs briefly adopted a Uniform Notification Date (UND)
  - Early system was abandoned due to making offers later than nonparticipating programs and wanting to make offers to current interns
- 2004 – San Francisco Bay Area UND organized by Russell Lemle at SFVA
  - 15 participating programs with 80 positions
Brief History of UND (cont.)

- 2007 – Addition to Northern CA programs of 27 other VA programs nationwide
  - UND of February 28, 2008 worked fairly smoothly

- 2008 – Currently 40 clinical programs (non-VA and VA) with 125 fellowship positions will participate in 2009 UND

  • Thanks to Dr. Lemle who collected this information for an upcoming APPIC newsletter article (Lemle, 2008)

Pros and Cons of UND

Pros

- Coordinated date allows programs and applicants to choose the best choice among all options
- Flexibility for some programs to make earlier offers but applicants accept or decline by UND
- Benefits to postdoctoral programs without an in-house internship program

Cons

- Non-participating programs “jumping ahead” of UND
- Overlap in time with internship selection
- Overlap of applicants with research fellowships with different timing of funding and offers
- Greater variance among postdoc programs
Overview of APPCN Match

- APPCN organized a UND from 1993 to 2000.
- Matching program modeled after APPIC’s internship match: 2001 to present.
- APPCN Membership: 2-year postdoc; at least 50% clinical, 10% research, 10% didactics; Training Director is board-certified through ABPP/ABCN.
- All APPCN programs participate in match.
- Non-APPCN programs that meet Houston Conference guidelines may also participate (must be two-year program and meet above percentages).

APPIC Postdoctoral Survey 2007

- UND and Match widely and well-accepted at internship level
- 40% of postdoctoral members do not want APPIC to provide any coordination of postdoctoral offers or acceptances
- 32% would like APPIC to provide such coordination, but not provide a formal Match
- 11% would like APPIC to provide a national postdoctoral Match
Overview of APPCN Match

- 2008 Match: 112 applicants, 82 positions
- Match rate: 69% of applicants, 94% of positions
- Average Number of Rankings Per Applicant
  - Matched Applicants: 5.5
  - Unmatched Applicants: 3.3
- Beginning in the 2008-2009 match, APPCN plans to add a new category to the match to allow neuropsychology positions that offer less than 50% clinical time into the match.
- More programs = more opportunities for applicants

UND and Match

- The UND of VA and Northern California programs is not meant for neuropsychology postdoc positions.
- All programs with neuropsychology positions are encouraged to take part in the APPCN matching program for those positions. In 2008, most new VA programs participated in the APPCN match.
- APPCN supports expanding the matching program to interested constituencies outside neuropsychology.
- UND’s and Matches within postdoctoral training are an evolving area.
Research Activity and Accreditation

- Accreditation is intended to “improve the quality of teaching, learning, research, and professional practice” (Domain B-1)
- But accreditation is not intended for postdoctoral residencies with a primary research focus
  - Domain A-1 – “preparation for practice at an advanced level in a substantive traditional or specialty practice area in professional psychology”
  - Domain B-2(b) – “the primary training method is supervised service delivery in direct contact with service recipients”

Research Activity and Accreditation

- Accredited programs can have research requirements or expectations but must be less than 50% of total time
- Research is included in one of the content areas in Domain B-3, including
  - strategies of scholarly inquiry
  - organization, management and administration issues pertinent to psychological service delivery and practice, training, and research
Research Activity and Accreditation

- Accredited programs must have the majority of time in “service delivery” activities (minimum of 51% time)
- Definition of “service delivery” and “service recipients”? (see competency content areas in Domain B-3(b))
  - Clinical activity as part of research projects (e.g., interviews, therapy, assessment)
  - Supervision and teaching
  - Consultation
  - Program development and evaluation

Research Activity and Accreditation

- Postdoctoral programs with research requirements and expectations must
  - Demonstrate that the program meets Domain A-1 (practice area) and B-2(b) (service delivery)
  - Document amount of time residents spend in service delivery activities, including direct clinical contact with clients/patients and other service delivery such as supervision, consultation, and program evaluation
  - Document research-related clinical activities
  - Document non-service delivery research activities such as data analysis, grant-writing, and preparation of research papers (less than 50% of total time)
Research Activity in Postdoctoral Programs

- APPIC postdoctoral members reported on the percentage of time fellows spent in research activity (2007 Member Survey)
  - 59% of programs – 0-10%
  - 22% of programs – 11-20%
  - 20% of programs – between 21% and 50%

Challenges & Rewards

Applicant perspective

- Challenges
  - Why complete a postdoctoral program?
  - Is it really necessary or desirable?
  - What kind of postdoc should I pursue?

- Rewards
  - Postdoc licensure requirements
  - Early career mentoring and track record
  - Board eligibility assured for ABPP affiliated boards
Challenges & Rewards
Program perspective

- Challenges
  - Why sponsor a postdoctoral program?
  - What kind of postdoctoral program?
  - How can this be funded?
  - Attracting postdocs more difficult than internship.
    - 2007-2008 APPIC Statistics- mean applications
      APA accredited programs - internship = 92, postdoc = 35; mean applications per slot - internship = 18, postdoc = 5

- Rewards
  - Opportunity to train at more advanced level.
  - Recognition by institution for quality and professional standing of program
  - Enhance continuum of training from internship through advanced specialty training.