



CoA *Commission on Accreditation*

Commission on Accreditation Update August 2013

Elizabeth A. Klonoff, Ph.D.
Chair

Carl Paternite, Ph.D.
Associate Chair, Program Review

Linda K. Knauss, Ph.D.
Associate Chair, Quality Assurance

Revised Edition: August 23, 2013

CoA July 2013 Meeting

The [Commission on Accreditation](#) (CoA) held its second program review meeting of the year July 17-21, 2013 in Washington, DC. A total of 29 doctoral, internship, and postdoctoral residency programs were reviewed for either initial or continued accreditation, as well as 3 requests for changes to programs' accredited status (e.g., "Accredited, inactive" status for a training year). Decisions made at the meeting are available on the Office of Program Consultation and Accreditation (OPCA) [website](#). Complete listings of [accredited](#) and [applicant](#) programs were updated to reflect actions taken at the July meeting on August 21.

Revising the G&P: Introducing the Standards for Accreditation

An extra day was added to the July CoA meeting to review the comments received during the Phase II public comment period that was open from November 29, 2012 through June 1, 2013. As with Phase I, more than 400 pages of rich comments were received from constituent groups, interested parties, and individuals. At the end of the meeting, the CoA completed draft "skeletons" or detailed outlines for each level of accreditation. The content of these outlines were released to the public during the CoA Open Forum at the 2013 APA Convention in Honolulu, HI on August 2, 2013. The outlines are also provided on page 6 of this Update. In preparing to move forward with drafting the new accreditation standards, the CoA made a number of key decisions that are discussed below.

Sequence of Training

First, public comment from groups and individuals during Phase II indicated support for preserving internship prior to conferral of the doctoral degree. The CoA concurred and this sequence will be maintained for the new accreditation standards.

Competencies

With regards to competencies, based on careful consideration of public comment, the new accreditation standards will incorporate a common set of primary, core professional competencies. Currently, the CoA is conducting a review of all of the major competency documents from across the psychology community to identify the core professional competencies that will be expected of all students/trainees in accredited programs. The final common core professional competencies will be available later this fall as part of the draft standards, following review and approval by the full Commission. Programs will be granted flexibility to define secondary competencies that go beyond the core articulated by the new standards.

Diversity

Another major question addressed through public comment had to do with how programs document the various aspects of diversity that need to be considered during program review. CoA had often received feedback that the way in which diversity was addressed in the current G&P often led to redundancy in the CoA self-study. To address these concerns, in the new accreditation standards there will not be a separate and distinct section on diversity. Instead, programs will be expected to address diversity in each of the relevant parts of the "skeleton" specific to the area under consideration.

Next Steps

The CoA will develop the language of the new standards consistent with the outlines approved at the July meeting. Following approval by the full CoA, the new standards will undergo technical writing and legal review for a targeted release for 6 months of public comment by the end of 2013.

Public Disclosure of Accreditation Decisions

Prompted by direction from the [Council for Higher Education Accreditation \(CHEA\)](#), the CoA considered options for enhancing the content of information provided to the public regarding decisions on accreditation status. Currently, the CoA reports accredited status and year of next site visit on its website and describes the guidelines for 3, 5, and 7 year decisions in its [Notice of Actions](#) published 30 days following each program review meeting. Although the CoA was granted continued recognition in January 2013, CHEA reiterated an interpretation of its standards that insists on specific information regarding the basis for accreditation decisions. As a result, the CoA developed possible options out for public comment this past spring.

At the July meeting, the CoA, informed by the public comments received, approved the following option consistent with CHEA's requirements. On its website, the CoA will include the following summary for each accredited program in the lists of accredited programs:

"At its meeting on [Date], the APA Commission on Accreditation voted to approve continued accreditation of the [Clinical, Counseling, School, combined, internship, or postdoctoral residency] [PhD or PsyD, if applicable] program at [institution], with the next site visit scheduled [3/5/7 or X years for programs on "accredited, on probation" status assuming no appeal] years from the date of the program's last site visit. The [number of years granted or decision to grant "accredited, on probation"] is based on the CoA's professional judgment [of/that] [insert guideline from below]."

- **7 Year Guideline:** [compliance or substantial compliance with all domains of the *Guidelines and Principles for Accreditation* (G&P). No serious deficiencies.]
- **5 Year Guideline:** [multiple minor deficiencies exist and/or deficiencies have been recently corrected.]
- **3 Year Guideline:** [program resource concerns, instability and/or serious deficiencies remain, but can be corrected in the near future (minor deficiencies typically addressed in the next self-study.)]
- **Probation:** [the accredited program is not consistent with the *Guidelines and Principles for Accreditation* (G&P) and may have its accreditation revoked. Prior to this designation, a program is provided an opportunity to show cause why it should not be placed on probation by providing a written response to the issues of concern. A program not coming into compliance

within two (2) CoA meetings after the show cause notice is assigned "accredited, on probation" status. This status is appealable within 30 days of receipt of written notice of the CoA decision. Although it is an accredited status, "accredited, on probation" is considered by the CoA to be an adverse action that serves as notice to the program, its students/interns/residents and the public that in the professional judgment of the CoA the accredited program is not consistent with the G&P.

Additionally, the CoA intends to integrate these changes concurrent with the launch of a dynamic and searchable database of accredited programs on the accreditation website. Prospective students, faculty, and the public, will be able to identify programs on the basis of a number of criteria (e.g., geographic location, degree offered, substantive area, etc.). The changes will be introduced early in 2014, pending final approval of complementary changes to the *Accreditation Operating Procedures* (AOP) as described on page 3.

New Accreditation Statuses

The revised [Accreditation Operating Procedures \(AOP\)](#) that allow for an "eligible" status and accredited "accredited, on contingency" status for internships and post-doctoral residency programs became effective on January 1, 2013. The CoA has prepared an application for "eligible" status, which consists of essential elements from Domains A-D. Applicants for "accredited, on contingency" will use the existing self-study instructions, except for the data requirements contained in Domain F. All [forms for the new statuses](#) are available on the CoA website. Programs considering applying under one of the new statuses are encouraged to contact the Office of Program Consultation and Accreditation for guidance prior to submitting an application and the required fees at (202) 336-5979.

Important Accreditation Dates

September 1	Winter Cycle 2014 Self-Study Due Date
September 9	Third-Party Comment for Winter Cycle 2014 Self-Studies Due
October 1	Annual Report Online (ARO) for accredited programs closes
October 17-20	Fall Program Review Meeting (Washington, DC)
December 31	Annual fees for accredited programs due
January 1, 2014	Spring/Summer Cycle 2014 Self-Study Due Date
January 8, 2013	Third-Party Comment for Spring Cycle 2014 Self-Studies Due

Annual Accreditation Fees

Annual fee invoices for accredited internship and postdoctoral residency programs were mailed on June 1, 2013 and, for accredited doctoral programs, on August 1, 2013. Annual fees are due by December 31, 2013. Programs not submitting payment by this due date may be subject to withdrawal from accredited status as described in Section 2.3 of the [Accreditation Operating Procedures \(AOP\)](#). Effective **January 1, 2013**, annual accreditation fees are as follows:

- **\$2250** (internship and postdoctoral residency programs);
- **\$3750** (doctoral programs with 1-50 students); and
- **\$4250** (doctoral programs with 50+ students).

Student count for doctoral programs is based on data submitted by programs to the ARO as of September 15, 2012.

Reporting Substantive Changes

Consistent with Domain H.2 of the [G&P](#) and Implementing Regulation (IR) [C-19](#), accredited programs at all levels of accreditation are reminded to notify the CoA of changes that could affect quality of training and education. With the provision of additional funds to accredited internships, it is especially important for these programs to notify the CoA in order to ensure that the addition of new positions, often linked with new rotations or different learning experiences, meets the standards of the profession for continued accreditation. Further [guidance](#) is available on the OPCA webpage.

Site Visitors

The Commission on Accreditation (CoA) continues to actively identify individuals to become accreditation site visitors. As those of you who have scheduled a site visit in recent years may know, the pool of visitors faces a critical shortage and it is becoming increasingly difficult to find site visitors. If you are not already involved, please consider attending a workshop and becoming a part of the [APA Site Visitor Corps](#). If you are a current site visitor, consider attending the Site Visitor Chair workshop to update your training and learn more about the Chair role. The CoA also recommends that current site visitors attend a training workshop every three years to remain current on accreditation policies and procedures.

Site Visitor training [workshops](#) are typically held concurrently with training council and other meetings of professional psychology in the fall and winter of each year. Additional information on becoming an APA site visitor is available on the [OPCA webpage](#).

2013 Annual Report Online (ARO)

The 2013 Annual Report Online (ARO) opened on May 13, 2013. The Office of Program Consultation and Accreditation (OPCA) Research staff will broadcast live webinars at 11 am EDT on **August 27th**. Any program staff, faculty/supervisors or administrators who want to participate in data entry training and discover what's new in the ARO may attend a webinar. Questions will be answered live. Registration is quick and easy; register for the [August 27th](#) webinar. Visit the APA accreditation [webpage for the ARO](#) to find other useful resources.

As of the end of July more than half of all accredited programs had started their ARO, and almost 10 percent had formally submitted their annual data. Unfortunately, the planned launch of the ARO Archives on the ARO webpage has been delayed. OPCA Research staff are working hard with the vendor to expedite this functionality that would enable programs to edit their historical records as necessary. We realize that this is an inconvenience to programs and will do our best to take action as needed to ensure that programs have adequate time to submit an accurate and complete ARO. We will let program directors know when the archives are available. At any time, contact the [OPCA Research office](#) with questions at (202) 336-6016.

CoA publishes annual summary data on doctoral, internship and postdoctoral residency programs. Reminder that annual summary data for 2012 will be published soon, but the 2012 ARO CoA Portal Survey results are now available on the APA accreditation website. Visit the [ARO Statistics](#) page for 2004-11 data and results from [additional research requests](#).

New Rehabilitation Specialty Guidelines

New guidelines for postdoctoral rehabilitation specialty training were released this spring. This document, available from the [Council of Specialties in Professional Psychology](#) will inform the CoA's reviews of rehabilitation postdoctoral residency programs starting in 2015. Each existing rehabilitation program accredited by the CoA will be asked this fall to submit a plan and timeline for making the necessary adjustments towards meeting the new guidelines. Applicant programs that have submitted self-studies will also be asked to provide plans and implementation timelines. Applications received by the office this fall will be notified of the guidelines and asked to provide a response as part of the preliminary review process. All programs will be expected to have transitioned no later than January 1, 2015.

Resolution on Accreditation and Licensure

A couple of years ago, the Council of Chairs of Training Councils (CCTC) and the APA Board of Educational Affairs (BEA) began discussing the resolution regarding accreditation at the doctoral and internship levels as requirements for licensure. While CoA has followed this discussion, it has not been involved in any efforts to make this APA policy, nor has CoA made any changes in what it does as a result of these efforts. Because the BEA resolution just passed the APA Council at its August 2013 meeting, CoA has not had an opportunity to discuss how this resolution will or will not influence the new accreditation standards that are now being written.

The CoA is sensitive to the challenges faced by new programs hoping to become accredited and, in response, approved [new statuses](#) for applicant internship and postdoctoral residency programs in 2012. In particular, the accredited status of “accredited, on contingency” status enables internship and postdoctoral residency programs to attain an accredited status prior to graduation of their first cohorts. Also, an “eligible” status permits programs that have yet to enroll their first cohorts to begin the process towards an accredited status. CoA plans to consider how to implement similar statuses for doctoral programs once it completes the revision of the *Guidelines and Principles for Accreditation* (G&P).

PUBLIC COMMENT

The CoA offers an [online comment system](#) for its publics to view proposals, access past comments (as appropriate), and to publicize individual and/or group opinions on accreditation policy proposals and issues. The [CoA Public Comment System](#) is the only means by which comments will be considered a part of the official record and reviewed by the Commission.

Please visit the [CoA Public Comment System](#) to download policy proposals, view comments received, or register to post comments. Please contact the OPCA at 202-336-5979 with any questions or issues regarding the public comment system.

Accreditation Operating Procedures (AOP)

Following acceptance of changes to the public disclosure of accreditation decisions (see *page 1, column 2*), the CoA approved complementary revisions to Section 8 (Confidentiality and Public Disclosure of Information) of the *Accreditation Operating Procedures* (AOP) for 30 days of public comment. The final revision of the confidentiality procedures will be forwarded for review by the APA Board of Educational Affairs and approval by the APA Board of Directors consistent with the CoA's processes. **The 30-day public comment period public comment period began on August 26, 2013 and continues through September 27, 2013.**

Office of Program Consultation and Accreditation (OPCA)

American Psychological Association
750 First Street NE
Washington, DC 20002

Phone: (202) 336-5979 Fax: (202) 336-5978

E-mail (General): APAAccred@apa.org E-mail (ARO): ARO@apa.org

Web: <http://www.apa.org/ed/accreditation>

Current Program Counts

<i>As of September 2, 2013</i>		<u>Accredited Programs</u>		<u>Applicant Programs Under Review</u>	
		PhD	PsyD	PhD	PsyD
Doctoral Programs	<i>Clinical</i>	174	63	2	5
	<i>Counseling</i>	65	4	0	1
	<i>School</i>	57	6	4	0
	<i>Combined</i>	5	3	2	0
	Total Doctoral	377		14	
Internship Programs	Total Internship	478		27	
Postdoctoral Residency Programs	<i>Traditional – Clinical</i>	50		14	
	<i>Specialty – Clinical Neuropsychology</i>	20		3	
	<i>Specialty – Clinical Health Psychology</i>	7		2	
	<i>Specialty – Clinical Child Psychology</i>	8		2	
	<i>Specialty – Rehabilitation Psychology</i>	5		1	
	<i>Specialty – Forensic Psychology</i>	1		0	
	Total Postdoctoral	91		22	
TOTAL		946		63	

Standards for Accreditation

The new standards for accreditation will contain five “areas” consistent across the three levels of accreditation: doctoral, internship, and postdoctoral residency. The specifics contained within the areas will be tailored to the unique needs for each education/training level. Diversity will be integrated throughout the standards as relevant to the particular area, but will not be duplicative as it is currently perceived with the current G&P.

I. Institutional and Program Context

- A. Type of program
- B. Institutional & program setting and resources
- C. Program context and policies
- D. Institutional/program context and diversity

II. Curriculum, Outcomes and Evaluation

- A. Goals of the program
- B. Competencies: This will include core competencies as defined by the profession as well as program-defined competencies; in postdoctoral residency programs in specialty areas the program will also have to discuss specialty-defined competencies
- C. Evaluation of student/intern/resident competencies and ongoing continuous quality evaluation of the program

III. Students/Interns/Residents

- A. Selection processes and criteria
- B. Educational environment and climate
- C. Program efforts to maximize student/trainee success
- D. Student/Intern/Resident diversity

IV. Faculty/Staff Credentials and Sufficiency

- A. Program leadership
- B. Faculty qualifications
- C. Faculty sufficiency
- D. Faculty diversity

V. Communication Practices

- A. Public disclosure
- B. Communication with program applicants
- C. Communication and relationship with the accrediting body