



Commission on Accreditation Update September 2014

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CoA Summer 2014 Meeting

The [Commission on Accreditation](#) (CoA) held its second program review meeting of the year on July 17-20, 2014 in Washington, DC. A total of 89 doctoral, internship, and postdoctoral residency programs were reviewed for either initial or continued accreditation, two internship programs were reviewed for eligibility status, and two 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 on August 19, 2014 to reflect actions taken at the July meeting.

New Way to Access the Accreditation Website

The Accreditation website is now only one click away from the APA homepage. In June 2014, the APA Board of Directors approved a motion to include a link to the Office of Program Consultation and Accreditation's website in the listing of "[Quick Links](#)" on the APA homepage. Please visit the homepage and click on "Accreditation" in the "Quick Links" section to seamlessly and quickly access the Accreditation website.

On-line System Update

The development of an on-line site visitor registration portal and self-study module are both nearing completion. Based on a tentative timeline, site visitors will receive IDs and passwords to update their information by January 1, 2015. We will begin beta-testing the self-study on-line module with a few internship and postdoctoral programs that have self-studies due January 1, 2015.

2015 CoA Self-Study and Site Visits

Programs scheduled for periodic review in 2015 have been assigned to [review cycles](#). As a reminder, programs with site visits in 2015 are required to use the [2015 CoA self-study instructions and tables](#). OPCA strongly encourages program directors to attend one of CoA's self-study workshops (as early in the self-study process as possible). There is no cost to participants for attending. Also, the Accreditation webpage contains a helpful self-study [FAQ](#). Programs are welcome to contact OPCA at (202) 336-5979 for consultation on completing the self-study.

Important Accreditation Dates 2014 - 2015

September 1	Winter Cycle 2015 Self-Study Due Date
September 8	Third-party Comment for Winter Cycle 2015 Self-Studies Due
October 23-26	Fall Program Review Meeting
December 31	Annual fees due for all accredited programs
January 1	Spring/Summer Cycle 2015 Self-Study Due Date
January 8	Third-Party Comment for Spring/Summer Cycle 2015 Self-Studies Due

STANDARDS OF ACCREDITATION (SoA) UPDATE

Two and a half years ago the CoA began the G&P Revision Roadmap process. Once completed and approved, the revised G&P will become the Standards of Accreditation (SoA). Through extensive and systematically solicited public comment from constituents, a draft of the SoA was developed in summer/fall 2013. This draft underwent a second public comment period that ended in July 2014. The comments received during this second period focused on six primary issues/questions: 1) the use of “health service psychology” as a substitute for “professional psychology”; 2) profession-wide competencies; 3) discipline-specific knowledge; 4) programs in religious institutions; 5) degree type definitions; and 6) direct observation. A summary outlining the public comment received and the CoA’s response is outlined [below](#). The goal is for CoA to finalize the SoA in late fall 2014 and then forward the SoA to APA governance for review and approval. This APA governance approval process will take place in 2015.

ACCREDITATION OPERATING PROCEDURES (AOP) UPDATE

In July 2014, CoA approved the draft AOP. The next steps are to send the draft to a technical writer for review and editing in early September 2014, release the edited draft for three months of public comment in fall 2014, and review public comment for potential adoption and forwarding to APA governance in early 2015. Key changes in the draft AOP include: 1) accreditation of programs for up to 10 years, rather than 7 years; 2) creation of “intent to apply” status and “accredited, on contingency” for doctoral programs; 3) random assignment of internships and postdoctoral programs to one of two review cycles, instead of one of three cycles; and 4) clearer indication that site visitor selection is the responsibility of CoA, with the details of the selection of site visitors moved to an Implementing Regulation [IR]).

NEW IRs ON THE HORIZON

CoA is currently developing IRs to address four topics. Once drafted, these IRs will go out for public comment.

- Discipline-specific knowledge
- Profession-wide competencies
- Direct observation
- Site visitor selection

REMINDERS FOR ACCREDITED PROGRAMS

2014 Annual Report Online (ARO)

The 2014 [Annual Report Online \(ARO\)](#) opened on May 1, 2014 and will close on September 15, 2014. Data preparation forms, tip sheets, and other resources for the 2014 ARO are now available. All program directors should have received email notifications with a reminder to update ARO permissions for user accounts. As a reminder, the OPCA research office provides annual summary reports about accredited programs and their students and faculty; [ARO statistics](#) and data tables from 2004-2012 along with responses to [external research requests](#) are publicly available online. Please contact the OPCA Research office between 9am-5pm Monday through Friday at (202) 336-6016 (or email aro@apa.org) with any questions.

Site Visitor Nominations

Nominate members of your faculty to serve as a CoA site visitor. A cardinal strength of specialized accreditation is that it is indeed a [peer review](#) process requiring the professional knowledge of experts in the profession and discipline. Given the diversity of training models and program goals, it is vital that CoA has a robust cadre of site visitors to provide effective and appropriate observations. Recruitment is ongoing for new site visitors. Also, current site visitors who have not attended a workshop within the past three years are urged to attend a workshop to learn about recent policy and procedural changes to the review process. The next [site visitor training workshop](#) is on Wednesday, September 17th in San Diego, CA. Please review the [FAQ on Becoming an APA Site Visitor](#) on the OPCA website or [email \(apaaccred@apa.org\)](mailto:apaaccred@apa.org) OPCA for more information.

Notify the CoA of Program Director Changes

Please remember to notify the OPCA in writing (by [e-mail \(apaaccred@apa.org\)](mailto:apaaccred@apa.org) is fine) when there is a change in the program’s training director, and provide the contact information (including the e-mail address) for that individual. If the new director was not previously involved with the program, his/her CV must also be provided for Office records. This is consistent with IR [C-19](#), which requires programs to notify CoA in advance of any substantive changes. This will also ensure that the correct individual(s) for the program is listed in our database and receives all of CoA’s correspondence.

CURRENT PROGRAM COUNTS (As of August 19, 2014)

Programs (Level and Area)		<u>Accredited Programs</u>		<u>Applicant Programs Under Review</u>	
		PhD	PsyD	PhD	PsyD
Doctoral Programs	<i>Clinical</i>	175	64	3	1
	<i>Counseling</i>	66	5	0	0
	<i>School</i>	59	5	1	3
	<i>Combined</i>	7	3	0	0
	Total Doctoral	384		8	
Internship Programs	Total Internship	489		48	
Postdoctoral Residency Programs	<i>Traditional – Clinical</i>	57		13	
	<i>Specialty—Clinical Child Psychology</i>	7		1	
	<i>Specialty—Clinical Health Psychology</i>	9		2	
	<i>Specialty—Clinical Neuropsychology</i>	21		2	
	<i>Specialty—Forensic Psychology</i>	1		0	
	<i>Specialty-Geropsychology</i>	0		1	
	<i>Specialty—Rehabilitation Psychology</i>	6		0	
	Total Postdoctoral	101		19	
TOTAL		974		75	

Note:

- *One of the postdoctoral programs in Clinical psychology is “accredited, on contingency” and is listed as an accredited program.*
- *Two internship programs have met the requirements to be listed as “eligible” and are not listed among the accredited programs.*

Office of Program Consultation and Accreditation (OPCA)

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Public Comment FAQ

Primary Issues/Concerns	Issue/Concern	CoA Response
"Health Service Psychology"	Public comment revealed some dissatisfaction/confusion related to the term "Health Service Psychology."	The "Health Service Psychology" label was selected in an effort to address the long-standing dissatisfaction with the term "professional psychology," which many felt was far too broad and uninformative. The new term seeks to broadly align both research and practice with a focus on integration of the two. The use of this term in the SoA will strategically align accreditation with current and future health service-related research and practice. Moving forward, CoA will work to further define and provide a rationale for the term within the SoA, including a clear understanding that programs will be accredited in clinical psychology, counseling psychology, school psychology, developed practice areas, and combinations of these areas.
Profession-wide Competencies	In the context of broad support for the creation and use of profession-wide competencies, CoA considered public comment that recommended adopting HSPEC versus the CoA-drafted profession-wide competencies.	The CoA reviewed its systematic methods and process for determining consensus profession-wide competencies (based on the consideration of nine published competency frameworks). After this review, CoA voted to retain the CoA-drafted consensus profession-wide competencies in the SoA, with minor edits/clarifications based on public comment. In addition to the information in the SoA, an Implementing Regulation for profession-wide competencies will be developed. Once complete, this IR will be posted for public comment prior to finalizing and adoption.

Public Comment FAQ

Primary Issues/Concerns	Issue/Concern	CoA Response
Discipline-specific Knowledge	Public comment revealed a need to further articulate discipline-specific knowledge as outlined in the draft SoA, specifically focusing on areas that: 1) can be met either at the undergraduate or graduate level; 2) require some graduate level coverage; or 3) require some higher level integration at the graduate level.	In order to respond to the request for a detailed explanation, CoA is developing an IR that will clarify and amplify on expectations specified in the SoA. In anticipation of developing an IR on discipline specific knowledge, CoA also requested consultation from the Council of Graduate Departments of Psychology (COGOP). The new IR will incorporate this consultation, outlining proposed areas of coverage at undergraduate and graduate levels. The IR will also incorporate feedback from public comment which expressed general support for flexibility in methods to acquire discipline-specific knowledge. The IR(s) will be posted for public comment prior to finalizing and adopting.
Programs in Religious Institutions	Some constituent groups suggested that the meaning or scope of "footnote 4" was changed in the SoA.	In drafting the SoA, CoA's intention was to move "footnote 4" from the current G&P and imbed it into the SoA without changing its meaning or scope. To address the unintended perception that the meaning of "footnote 4" had been changed, the SoA will be edited to fully incorporate the text from footnote 4 in the SoA, as well as additional language that was reviewed during public comment. To review the revised language, please click here .
Degree Type Definitions	Public comment suggested that the placement of definitions of degrees in Standard I was inconsistent with the goal of adopting profession-wide competencies that cut across degree type. Also, comment indicated that the degree definitions in the SoA needed further clarification.	Based on the public comment, CoA will move the definition of degrees to Standard II, following the description of discipline-specific knowledge and competencies. The definitions will be refined and the CoA will consider SoA language to allow for other degree type programs (e.g., Ed.D. or P.P.D.) that might demonstrate education and training within the scope of accreditation.

Public Comment FAQ

Primary Issues/Concerns	Issue/Concern	CoA Response
Direct Observation	The public comment raised logistical and practical questions related to the requirement that assessment of trainees' competence by supervisors be based, in part, on direct observation.	The SoA specifies minimum requirements for direct observation of trainees. CoA recognizes that many programs already exceed the minimum requirement specified in the SoA, and this requirement is not intended to create a greater burden for these programs. The CoA is developing an IR to clarify its expectations regarding direct observation (e.g., frequency of observation, what constitutes as direct observation, and who can observe).

Updated Proposed Footnote 4 Language

Administrative Responsibilities. The program recognizes the importance of cultural and individual differences and diversity in the training of psychologists. The program has made systematic, coherent, and long-term efforts to attract and retain students and faculty from diverse backgrounds into the program. Consistent with such efforts, it acts to ensure a supportive and encouraging learning environment appropriate for the training of diverse individuals and the provision of training opportunities for a broad spectrum of individuals. Further, the program avoids any actions that would restrict program access on grounds that are irrelevant to success in graduate training, either directly or by imposing significant and disproportionate burdens on the basis of the personal and demographic characteristics set forth in the definition of cultural diversity. Because of the United States' rich diverse higher education landscape, training can take place in both secular and faith based settings. Thus this requirement does not exclude programs from having a religious affiliation or purpose and adopting and applying admission and employment policies that directly relate to this affiliation or purpose, so long as public notice of these policies has been made to applicants, students, faculty, or staff before their application or affiliation with the program. These policies may provide a preference for persons adhering to the religious purpose or affiliation of the program, but they shall not be used to preclude the admission, hiring, or retention of individuals because of the personal and demographic characteristics set forth under the definition of cultural diversity. This provision is intended to permit religious policies as to admission, retention, and employment only to the extent that they are protected by the U.S. Constitution. It will be administered as if the U.S. Constitution governed its application. Notwithstanding the above, and regardless of a program's setting, the program may not constrain academic freedom or otherwise alter the requirements of these standards. Finally, compelling pedagogical interests require that each program prepare graduates to navigate cultural and individual differences in research and practice, including those that may produce value conflicts or other tensions arising from the intersection of different areas of diversity.