



COMMISSION ON ACCREDITATION (CoA)

POLICY AND PROCEDURE UPDATE

DECEMBER 2010

Richard Seime, Ph.D.

Chair

Joyce Illfelder-Kaye, Ph.D.

Associate Chair, Program Review

Elizabeth Klonoff, Ph.D.

Associate Chair, Quality Assurance

CoA Fall Meeting – Program Actions

The Commission on Accreditation (CoA) held its fall meeting on November 4-7, 2010 at the APA building in Washington, DC. CoA reviewed 65 doctoral, internship, and postdoctoral programs for initial and continued accreditation, as well as 8 requests for change in status. In addition to regular program review, the meeting agenda included review of narrative responses requested from over 150 programs during the past year.

As of the conclusion of the fall meeting, there are **909** accredited programs: **373** doctoral programs; **477** internship programs; and **59** postdoctoral residency programs. Ten programs were granted initial accreditation at this meeting. All [decisions on programs' accredited status](#) are posted on the Office of Program Consultation and Accreditation (OPCA) website.

As part of its annual reaffirmation of accredited programs, CoA reviewed programs' annual report submissions at the fall meeting. According to section 2.1 of the *Accreditation Operating Procedures (AOP)*, all accredited programs are required to submit an annual report. CoA reviewed the completion status of all programs and has contacted the programs that did not fully submit the 2010 Annual Report Online (ARO) within the original 5-month time frame. These programs have been granted a final extension to complete the ARO through January 15, 2011. As a reminder to all programs, in accordance with section 2.3 of the AOP, failure to complete the ARO may result in the program being deemed to have withdrawn from accredited status.

The review of the ARO data also included analysis of program outcomes as identified in Implementing Regulation D.4-7. CoA has requested additional information from the outlier programs with respect to their achievement of the identified thresholds.

Members Completing Terms of Service

The fall meeting was the last for 12 members of CoA who will end their terms of service at the close of 2010. CoA is grateful to these members for their dedicated service to quality assurance in psychology education.

- Jeffrey Baker, Ph.D. (2005-2010)
- Laura Barbanel, Ed.D. (2010)
- Rodney Goodyear, Ph.D. (2008-2010)
- Donna Horn, Ph.D. (2008-2010)
- Keren Lehavot, MS. (2010)
- Mona Mitnick, J.D. (2010)
- Carlton Parks, Ph.D. (2008-2010)
- Ruperto Perez, Ph.D. (2008-2010)
- Rick Short, Ph.D. (2008-2010)
- Milton Strauss, Ph.D. (2010)
- Judith Watkins, Ed.D. (2008-2010)
- Richard Zinbarg, Ph.D. (2010)

CoA Leadership 2011

During the fall meeting, CoA held its annual elections for the three leadership positions on the Commission. The three individuals holding these positions in 2010 were re-elected to their same roles for 2011:

Richard Seime, Ph.D.: *CoA Chair*

Joyce Illfelder-Kaye, Ph.D.: *Associate Chair, Program Review*

Elizabeth Klonoff, Ph.D.: *Associate Chair, Quality Assurance*

CoA Meeting Dates 2011

All meetings will be held in the APA building in Washington, DC unless noted otherwise:

February 2-3	New Member Training (Baltimore, MD)
February 4-6	Annual Policy Meeting (Baltimore, MD)
March 31-April 3	Spring Program Review Meeting
July 14-17	Summer Program Review Meeting
October 20-23	Fall Program Review Meeting

New IR for Domain G

CoA adopted a new Implementing Regulation at its November meeting. The new IR, [C-6\(b\): Accreditation Status and CoA Contact Information](#), provides clarification on how this information should be provided within programs' public materials, consistent with Domain G.1(b) of the *Guidelines and Principles* (G&P). Programs are encouraged to review this new IR to ensure they are providing complete and accurate information to the public.

As a reminder, to ensure compliance with all relevant policies, all programs should periodically consult the OPCA website for the latest version of the IRs and other news items. In particular, Section "C" of the IRs contains the policies which clarify portions of the G&P, and is the section most relevant to accredited and applicant programs.

Reminder: Annual Fees Due!

Annual fees for all accredited programs are due by **December 31, 2010** (note: programs granted initial accreditation at the July or November CoA meetings are exempt from 2010 annual fees). Call the OPCA (202-336-5979) with any questions regarding payment status.

Reminder: Notify CoA of Program Director Changes!

Per IR C-19, programs are required to notify CoA of any program substantive changes. CoA wants to reiterate the importance of [informing the Office](#) when there is a change in program director and providing the contact information, particularly the e-mail address, for that individual. Doing so will ensure that the correct person(s) for each program receives CoA's correspondence and periodic updates, including ARO login information and reminders.

INFORMATION ESPECIALLY FOR DOCTORAL PROGRAMS

Review of Doctoral Programs' C-20 Data

Prior to the fall meeting, OPCA staff reviewed the websites for each accredited doctoral program to determine adherence to the requirements of IR C-20 regarding public disclosure of required education and training outcomes. *Programs that appeared to be missing most or all of the required data have been contacted directly by the OPCA to request that data are made available immediately.*

The majority of programs, though substantially compliant, had minor errors in the presentation of their information. CoA urges ALL programs to carefully review the [most recent version of IR C-20](#) to ensure that the information is being provided in the required format. In reviewing program websites, OPCA staff noted some of the most common errors that were found:

- ✓ If more than one accredited program in department/university, unclear which data apply to which program
- ✓ Data are one or more years out of date
- ✓ The information is not all located in one place
- ✓ The information is located more than one click away from the doctoral program (*not university*) homepage
- ✓ The information does not have correct title (see IR)
- ✓ Program costs are located in a different place than other information; are not specific to the accredited program; or are difficult to understand/interpret
- ✓ Internship placement does not include both number AND percentage for each required category; one or more required categories are missing; data are not based on total number of students applying for any internship
- ✓ Attrition numbers AND percentages are not provided
- ✓ Licensure is calculated incorrectly

All doctoral programs are asked to carefully review their website information and ensure compliance with all current requirements of IR C-20 prior to **March 1, 2011**. OPCA staff will be reviewing all program websites again after that date for CoA's review at its April 2011 meeting.

Review of Public Comments on IR C-16

At its fall meeting, CoA discussed the [public comments received](#) on the proposed revisions to IR C-16, *Evaluating Program Adherence to the Principle of "Broad and General Preparation" for Doctoral Programs*, which were accepted from May-August 2010.

Despite not generating a large number of comments, the comments that were made conveyed consistent and often negative messages. In general, the criticisms centered around impressions that the IR's revisions were: micromanaging instruction; going against the spirit of the G&P that allows for flexibility within models; making it more likely that programs will respond by developing a course for each area; and so forth. In fact, the proposed revisions to IR C-16 were intended to clarify for the field the problems CoA has identified in its review of doctoral programs and how CoA currently functions. Accreditation is for the protection of the public who may seek services from practitioners who are licensed, and it is most often state licensing boards that are the driving factor in the proliferation of courses.

Thus, in preparation for CoA's February 2011 policy meeting, we are seeking additional input from training councils and doctoral programs on some of the key issues in order to begin thinking about how best to revise IR C-16. We invite input and feedback through any method, in writing or conversation with CoA representatives, by **February 1, 2011** on any or all of the issues listed on the following page. Any written comments should be provided [via e-mail](#) to the OPCA, or mailed to the address below.

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Questions for Doctoral Programs and Training Councils

1. **Breadth:** CoA has found significant variability in what programs consider to be foundational, in line with Domain B.3. A number of programs appear to use unexpected or idiosyncratic definitions of some of the foundational areas. For example, a program might argue that broad and general training in cognitive psychology is met by a course in cognitive behavioral therapy that only provides manualized treatment and says nothing about, for example, how people think about things, or what they remember. Other programs propose meeting the human development requirement solely through a course in infant development. How should the areas in Domain B.3 be defined so that they correspond to what the current concept of these non-practice-related fields would be to someone who specialized in it? How can these areas be defined so that they do not hold programs to standards that are frozen in time?
2. **Depth:** How much breadth and depth is needed to ensure that students are knowledgeable in key areas? Related to this, how much of an overview must be provided to be sure students have sufficient foundation to then begin more specialized education in one of these areas? Although some argue that undergraduate education should be sufficient to provide an overview, many state licensing boards require specific survey courses in foundational areas; also, some programs accept student without prior psychology degrees or with degrees obtained years ago. What should the minimal standard for breadth and depth be?
3. **Graduate Level:** Many syllabi for courses in these foundational areas look infinitely more like undergraduate courses than graduate ones. They use textbooks that are commonly accepted for use in undergraduate courses in their own universities (or where the author states in the preface that its intention is to provide a solid undergraduate survey course); the course relies solely or primarily on multiple choice or short answer exams that appear to be from the textbook test bank; additional assignments are minimal at best and do not seem to require any critical thinking or writing skills. What is the operational definition of a “graduate level” course? Related to that, what indicators should be used to decide if a course is being taught at the graduate level and how should a syllabus be evaluated?
4. **Faculty:** Programs must provide evidence that, if it chooses to supply courses directed to these areas within its curriculum, they are taught by faculty who by “education, training, and/or experience, are qualified to teach in the given area at the graduate level” (existing IR C-16). What kind of evidence should be acceptable?