

Oklahoma Professional Psychology Training Consortium

Due Process Procedures

The Consortium provides collaborative due process procedures for remediation, disciplinary actions, and grievances. They emphasize due process and assure fairness in decisions about Psychology Interns, and also provide avenues of appeal that allow interns to dispute decisions and file grievances.

The spirit that guides due process procedures is dialogue and collaboration. Neither the Consortium nor the affiliated training sites make unilateral decisions unless there is imminent risk to clients, students, interns, or others. The protection of clients and Psychology Interns is the overriding principle in collaborative decision-making.

The Consortium and affiliated training sites follow due process guidelines to ensure that decisions about interns are not arbitrary or personally based. These guidelines include appeal procedures that permit any intern to challenge program decisions. The due process guidelines include the following:

1. Presenting Psychology Interns with the program expectations regarding professional functioning at the start of the training year.
2. Specify evaluative procedures, including the time frame and the method, in the *Intern Training Manual* before the start of the training year.
3. Define “problematic behavior.”
4. Provide prompt notice and an opportunity for a hearing concerning failure to meet competence in any particular area.
5. Provide a remediation plan for skill deficiencies or problematic behavior, including a time frame for remediation and the consequences of not rectifying the deficiencies or problematic behavior.
6. Provide Psychology Interns with a written description of procedures they may use to appeal decisions and to file grievances.
7. Ensure that Psychology Interns have sufficient time to respond to any action taken by the program that affects them.
8. Use input from multiple professional sources, including the Site Supervisors, when making decisions or recommendations regarding the intern's performance.
9. Document, in writing and to all relevant parties, the action(s) taken and its (their) rationale. All records are maintained by OPPTC in perpetuity.

Defining areas of concern

In the Consortium's psychology training program, areas of concern typically fall into one of two areas:

1. **Skill deficiency.** Skill deficiencies may include lack of appropriate skills in:

- Psychological assessments;
- Diagnostics;
- Test administration or interpretation;
- Forming therapeutic alliances with patients/clients; or
- Knowledge of pertinent research or additional weaknesses such as:
 - Conducting professional activities beyond the intern's abilities or scope
 - Disregard for a supervisor's guidance; or
 - Resistance to appropriate opportunities for learning.

Skill progress is monitored in the *OPPTC Capstone* review that occurs monthly with Site Directors and the DCT along the Consortium. Any area rated "0" (below readiness for internship) or "U" (unsatisfactory progress in training focus) will be addressed in a *Remediation Plan*. This plan is signed by the Site Supervisor, DCT and Psychology Intern and provides a timeline and objective goals for skill remediation.

2. **Problematic behavior.** Behaviors are identified as problematic behaviors if they include one or more of the following characteristics:

- The Psychology Intern does not acknowledge, understand, or address the problem when it is identified.
- The problem is not merely a reflection of a skill deficit that can be rectified by academic or didactic training.
- The quality of services delivered by the Psychology Intern is sufficiently negatively affected.
- The problem is not restricted to one area of professional functioning.
- A disproportionate amount of attention by training personnel is required.
- The Psychology Intern's behavior does not change as a function of feedback, remediation efforts, and/or time.

There is an Emergency Suspension available in egregious cases of harm, cruelty, significant ethical breach. This will result in immediate emergency meeting of the OPPTC directorate and immediate notification of the Psychology Intern's academic program.

II. Procedures for responding to a skill deficiency or problematic behavior

If Capstone progress or emergent supervisor concern reflects a skill deficiency or problematic behavior, the following procedure will be initiated, unless the Consortium training directorate determines that immediate disciplinary action/suspension is appropriate.

1. Within five (5) business days of identification of deficiency the monthly Capstone meeting of Site Supervisors and the Oklahoma Professional Psychology Training Consortium Director of Clinical Training (also “OPPTC DCT”, “Consortium DCT”), a meeting between the Site Supervisor and Psychology Intern will occur.
2. At that meeting, the Psychology intern and Site Supervisor complete the *Remediation Plan*, which includes signatures from both parties. The Psychology Intern will receive a written copy of this procedure—a redundancy (as it is in the *OPPTC Intern Manual*), but meant to provide the Psychology Intern with easy access to their rights along the process.
3. Should problematic behavior be identified (not associated with Capstone progress meeting), the DCT is notified immediately. There is then a two-pronged decision. If the problematic behavior meets criteria for Emergency Suspension as described, above, the emergency meeting of DCT and Site Directors occurs within 48 hours. At that point, the Psychology Intern is provided with written documentation of Emergency Suspension and the Psychology Intern has appellate options as outlined, below. Should the problematic behavior not meet criteria for Emergency Suspension, the procedure would be as described for skill deficiency identified at a monthly Capstone meeting among the Site Supervisors and OPPTC DCT.
4. If the Psychology Intern is in agreement with the Remediation Plan, the signed document is forwarded to the DCT within three (3) business days.
5. Should the Psychology Intern not accept the *Remediation Plan*, a written appeal from the Psychology Intern is due to the DCT within three (3) business days. This appeal comes in the form of a written correspondence, indicating clearly “Appeal of Remediation Plan”, with explanation of position. The Director of Clinical Training will seek input from the Site Directors in consideration of the Psychology Intern’s appeal.
6. The Consortium DCT may request informal problem resolution assistance from APPIC (pending OPPTC membership approval in APPIC).
7. The Consortium DCT will facilitate and a meeting with the Site Supervisor and Psychology Intern to attempt resolution within thirty (30) days.
8. If the above procedures do not bring resolution, then the Consortium Director of Clinical Training will, upon the Psychology Intern’s request, schedule a hearing at which the Psychology Intern may respond.
9. Following the hearing, appropriate disciplinary action may be considered, as described below.

Possible Disciplinary Actions

The Director of Clinical Training, after consultation with the Consortium Training Committee/Site Directors, may implement any of the following disciplinary actions. These are not necessarily sequential. The DCT will select the course and extent of the action based on the needs of the Psychology Intern, the affiliated training site, and the clients at the affiliated training site.

1. Written Notice. A Written Notice directs the Psychology Intern to discontinue unsatisfactory action(s) or behavior(s). The Psychology Intern will be given a letter (copy provided to academic program) specifying the following:
 - a. Notification to the Psychology Intern that there is unsatisfactory behavior.
 - b. Description of the unsatisfactory behavior.
 - c. Actions required to correct the unsatisfactory behavior.
 - d. Timeline for correction.
 - e. Consequences if the problem is not corrected.

2. Probation. If the area of problematic behavior is deemed serious enough, the Psychology Intern may be placed on probation. The Psychology Intern will be given a letter specifying the following:
 - a. Description of the unsatisfactory behavior.
 - b. Actions required to correct the unsatisfactory behavior.
 - c. Timeline for correction.
 - d. Explanation of the procedure that will be used to determine whether satisfactory progress has been made.
 - e. Consequences if the problem is not corrected.

3. Administrative Leave. The Psychology Intern may be placed on leave, accompanied by suspension of all duties and responsibilities as a Psychology Intern at OPPTC. The Psychology Intern will be informed in writing about potential consequences resulting from suspension, which might include inability to complete training hours or other requirements.

4. Dismissal. When appropriate, a Psychology Intern may be dismissed from the Consortium training program. The intern must receive written notice of dismissal. Dismissal might occur under the following circumstances:
 - a. It is determined that remediation cannot be successfully accomplished;
 - b. Serious violation of ethical standards;
 - c. Serious violation of Consortium or affiliated training site policy and procedures;
 - d. Serious legal violation(s); or

- e. Any other condition that jeopardizes client, student, staff, or intern welfare.

Following the delivery of the written document outlining the disciplinary action to be taken to correct problematic behaviors or skill deficiencies, the Psychology Intern may accept the disciplinary action, or may appeal to the Consortium's Board of Directors. Pending the decision by the OPPTC of the Board of Directors (BOD=the training directorate of the Consortium, comprised of the DCT and Site Directors), the intern remains subject to the disciplinary action imposed by the Director of Training.

5. Appeals. The steps to be taken when a Psychology Intern appeals a disciplinary decision to the Consortium's Board of Directors are as follows:
 1. If a Psychology Intern desires to appeal a disciplinary decision of the Director of Clinical Training, that intern may appeal that decision to the full Board of Directors of the Oklahoma Professional Psychology Training Consortium. In cases wherein the actions of DCT or a Site Director is at the core of a Psychology Intern's appeal, faculty from other sites will occupy the board seats to make the decision. This appeal is to be filed with the Secretary of the Board of Directors within ten days of the issuance of the Director of Clinical Training's decision. The Appeal must include evidence and rationale which support the basis of the Appeal. The Appeal may include a proposed alternative resolution of the grievance under consideration.
 2. Within ten days of the receipt of an Appeal, the Intern shall schedule a meeting of the full Board of Directors of the Consortium at which the Appeal will be considered. The decision of the full Board of Directors shall be final.