DUE PROCESS AND GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

Doctoral Internship in Psychology
Counseling, Health and Wellness Services
UNIVERSITY OF PUGET SOUND

As employees of the university, interns are subject to staff policies, including but not limited to the Staff Corrective Action Policy, which describes the university’s approach to addressing circumstances of unsatisfactory performance or workplace behavior. While this due process and grievance procedure is provided as an additional mechanism for resolving concerns as required for participation in the APPIC member internship program, it does not alter in any way the employment-at-will relationship between the university and its at-will staff members. The internship program at Counseling, Health and Wellness Services (CHWS) offers additional evaluative and appeal procedures for trainees to ensure that decisions made by the Training Staff are clear, thoughtful, and fair, based on the facts and circumstances of the situation. It therefore expands upon the university’s staff complaint resolution practices and disciplinary policies to emphasize due process and details appeal procedures available to interns. The training team, in consultation with Human Resources, has made a good faith effort to ensure this policy does not conflict with staff policies; however, if such a conflict exists, the relevant staff policy will supersede the procedures described in this document.

EVALUATION PHILOSOPHY

Ongoing Feedback
The Training Staff continually assesses each intern’s performance. Feedback facilitates professional growth by acknowledging strengths and identifying areas needing improvement. Supervisors provide written evaluations four times during the training year and interns complete self-assessments at the beginning of the year.

All CHWS psychologists serve as members of the training staff to ensure diverse training for Psychology Interns. Each primary supervisor consults with other professional and support staff who have significant contact with interns. It is each supervisor’s task to combine these diverse evaluations and provide the interns with summary evaluations of their progress in the training program. Based on these evaluations, the supervisor, the Training Director and the intern may modify the intern’s Training Plan to better meet his or her needs and program requirements. Specifics regarding content and timing of formal evaluations may be found in the Training Manual, under Evaluation Process in Section IV. The intern training manual is distributed to interns at the start of the year.
Training Committee
The Training Committee is chaired by the Training Director and includes the other two licensed psychologists who supervise interns. TC members share information and periodically review each intern’s progress, thus providing additional evaluative data.

Communication with Home Academic Program
Early in the year, the CHWS Training Director reaches out to each Academic Training Director to inquire about goals for the trainee. At least twice more during the year, the home program receives evaluations of intern skills, professional functioning, and progress toward completion of the internship. If problems arise the Training Director will inform the home program and will solicit their input in approach to remediation.

DUE PROCESS GUIDELINES FOR ONGOING EVALUATION

This program uses the same procedures to evaluate all Psychology Interns throughout the course of the internship as described above in “Ongoing Feedback.” Due process includes steps that assure fair evaluation of intern performance, intern awareness of options, and clearly defined steps for notice, hearing and appeal. General guidelines for due process at CHWS include:

1. The Training Committee will present the program’s expectations for professional functioning to interns in writing, at the start of the training period. This is discussed in a group format during orientation and individually in supervision. Interns sign an acknowledgement indicating receipt and understanding of, and agreement to abide by, these guidelines and other university staff policies.

2. The procedures for evaluation, including when, how, and by whom these will be conducted are described to the interns during orientation.

3. The various procedures and actions involved in decisions regarding inadequate skills or problematic behaviors are described to interns.

4. The Training Director will communicate early and often with academic programs about any suspected difficulties with interns and when appropriate, will seek input from academic programs about how to address such difficulties.
5. The TC institutes, when appropriate, a remediation plan for identified inadequacies, including a time frame for expected remediation, and shall outline consequences of not rectifying the inadequacies.

6. The TC provides interns a written description of how the intern may appeal the program’s action.

7. The TC ensures that interns have sufficient time to respond to any action taken by the training program.

8. The TC uses input from multiple professional sources when making decisions or recommendations regarding an intern’s performance.

9. The rationale for and actions taken by the TC are documented in writing and shared with all relevant parties.

**DEFINITION OF PROBLEMATIC BEHAVIORS, ATTITUDES OR CHARACTERISTICS IN AREAS OF PRACTICE RESPONSIBILITY**

Doctoral interns are expected “to demonstrate interpersonal and professional competence; self-awareness, self-reflection, and self-evaluation; openness to processes of supervision; and to resolve issues or problems that interfere with professional development or functioning in a satisfactory manner,” as outlined in “The comprehensive Evaluation of Student-Trainee Competence in Professional Training Programs” model policy developed by the Council of Chairs of Training Councils in psychology. In contrast, problematic behavior, attitudes, or characteristics are defined broadly as interferences in professional functioning which are exhibited in one or more of the following ways:

- an inability or unwillingness to acquire and integrate professional standards into one’s repertoire of professional behavior;
- an inability to acquire professional skills in order to reach an acceptable level of competency; and/or
- an inability to control personal stress, strong emotional reactions, and/or psychological dysfunction such that they interfere with professional functioning.

1. Problematic intern behavior, attitudes, or characteristics typically include one or more of the following:
   a. The intern does not acknowledge, understand, or address the problem when it is identified;
   b. The problem is not merely a reflection of a skill deficit, which can be rectified by academic, didactic, or experiential training;
c. The quality of services delivered by the intern is sufficiently affected in a negative way;
d. The problem is not restricted to one area of professional functioning;
e. A disproportionate amount of time and attention is required by training staff;
f. The intern’s behavior does not change as a function of feedback, remediation efforts, and/or time.

2. In implementing remediation or sanction interventions, the training staff is charged with being mindful of and balancing the needs of the intern, the clients involved, other members of the intern cohort, the training staff, other agency personnel, and the interests of the college. Possible interventions may include all those mentioned above in relation to deficits in skill and competence: verbal warning, written acknowledgment, written warning, schedule modification, probation, suspension of direct service activities, and dismissal from the training program.

3. When a combination of interventions does not rectify the problem or when the intern seems unable or unwilling to alter problematic behavior, attitudes, or characteristics, the Training Committee may need to take more formal action:

   a) Give a limited endorsement, specifying settings in which the intern could function adequately;
   b) Inform the intern and the academic program that the intern has not successfully completed the internship;
   c) Recommend and assist in implementing a career shift for the intern, and/or
d) Terminate the intern from the Internship Program and the University of Puget Sound.

**Sexual Harassment or Misconduct**
The university’s Policy Prohibiting Harassment and Sexual Misconduct describes the procedures for resolving complaints regarding all forms of discriminatory harassment, including sexual harassment, and sexual misconduct. A complaint may be initiated at any time under this Policy by an intern, by member(s) of the Counseling, Health and Wellness Services professional or support staff, by clients, or by any other party with standing under the Policy. This policy allows for informal or formal resolution. Any complaints regarding conduct prohibited by this Policy involving the intern as either complainant or respondent will be subject to and addressed through the procedures outlined in this Policy.

**Other Areas of Formal Review**
A formal review may be activated at any time by an intern, by member(s) of the Counseling, Health and Wellness Services professional or support staff, or by clients. The following situations may call for the filing of a grievance and activation of a formal review. This list is suggestive of, but not limited to, the types of behaviors and events which may arise:

1. Violation of the APA Ethical Principles and Code of Conduct for Psychologists.
2. Insubordinate behavior.
3. Exploitive or abusive behavior.
4. Other behaviors not listed elsewhere in this document but which represent infringement on the rights, privileges, and responsibilities of interns, professional and support staff, and other volunteers/employees or clients of Counseling, Health and Wellness Services or the university.
5. Removal of a client or patient’s protected health information from Counseling, Health and Wellness Services.

As indicated in the opening of this document, procedures as stated in the university’s staff, faculty, and campus-wide policies (http://www.pugetsound.edu/about/offices-services/human-resources/policies/) will first apply to the disposition of the case, with the procedures outlined here considered supplemental to those articulated in university policy. While the university, at its sole discretion, may implement these formal review procedures in these and other circumstances, the university retains the right to initiate immediate suspension or termination of employment as described in the Staff Corrective Action Policy.

PROCEDURES FOR RESPONDING TO PROBLEMATIC BEHAVIORS, ATTITUDES OR CHARACTERISTICS IN AREAS OF PRACTICE RESPONSIBILITY

This program has well-defined procedures to guide its response to interns with problematic performance or conduct in areas of practice responsibility. If a staff member or client has concerns about an intern’s behavior (ex: ethical or legal violations, such as described in the category addressed above), the following procedures are followed:

1. The staff member consults with the Training Director and/or the CHWS Director to determine if there is reason to proceed and/or if the behavior in question is being adequately addressed.
2. If the Training Director and the Training Committee determine that the intern behavior needs to be addressed, the Training Director will meet with the intern to provide verbal and written notification of the concerns.
3. The Training Director will request the intern submit a written statement to the Training Committee with reference to the identified problems.

4. After reviewing the information the Training Committee may recommend one or more remedial interventions that modify the intern’s training plan.

5. The intern will be notified in writing of the remediation plan and the Training Director will review it with the intern. This review may occur with the intern’s primary supervisor.

6. The intern may choose to accept the plan or may choose to challenge the action. The procedures for challenging the action are described in the section titled Grievance Procedures.

REMEDIAL ACTION PROCEDURES TO ADVISE AND ASSIST INTERNS

If the Training Committee deems remedial intervention necessary, the identified problems in performance or conduct will be systematically addressed. The intern will be informed of how his/her performance, behavior, knowledge, or attitude differs from the expectations of the TC. This information will be provided to the intern in writing and in face-to-face discussion.

Possible remedial steps include (but are not limited to) the following:

1. Increase supervision, either with the same or another supervisor.

2. Change in the format, emphasis, and/or focus of supervision.

3. Reduce the intern’s clinical work or other responsibilities.

4. Require specific academic coursework, continuing education or a tutorial.

5. Recommend or require personal therapy, with a clear statement about whether and how proof of compliance/completion will be provided.

6. Recommendation of a leave of absence and/or a second internship.

7. Place the intern on probation in the event the intern fails to meet or make satisfactory progress toward meeting the general expectations of the training experience. The probation may be for a specified period of time and include regular evaluation/supervision. While on probation, the intern will function under a remediation program designed by the Training Committee and
approved by the Training Director and the Director of Counseling, Health and Wellness Services. Probation will be terminated by action of the Training Director and Director of Counseling and Psychological Services following a review session.

8. Suspend the intern. If charged with violating the APA Code of Ethics, or Washington State law regarding the practice of psychology, the intern may be temporarily suspended from engaging in any/or all counseling or direct services. Such suspensions can be initiated by the Training Director or Director of Counseling, Health and Wellness Services. All temporary suspensions become effective immediately upon oral notification of the intern. The written notification, which includes the reasons for the sanction, is expected to be in the hands of the intern within one working day.

9. A meeting with the Training Director will be set. At that meeting the Training Director will review the conditions imposed and indicate the progress to be made toward remediating the concerns.

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

There are two situations in which grievance procedures can be initiated:

1. If an intern encounters significant difficulties or problems (ex: poor supervision, unavailability of supervisor, evaluations perceived as unfair, workload issues, other staff conflict) during the training experience, an intern may:

   a) Discuss the issue with the staff member(s) involved.
   b) If the issue cannot be resolved informally, the intern should discuss the concern with the Training Director or Director of Counseling, Health and Wellness Services. If the issue is with the Training Director or the Director of Counseling, Health and Wellness Services the intern should consult with Human Resources for assistance with addressing the grievance.
   c) If the Training Director or Director cannot resolve the issue, the intern can formally challenge any action or decision taken by the Training Director, or the Training Committee, or any member of the training staff by following this procedure:
      i. The intern should file a formal complaint in writing and with all supporting documents with the Training Director. If the intern is
challenging a formal evaluation or remediation plan, the intern must do so within 10 business days of receipt of the evaluation/plan for this procedure to apply.

ii. Within 5 business days of receiving a formal complaint, the Training Director will consult with the Director and implement Review Panel procedures as described below.

d) As employees of the university, interns may also consult at any time with Human Resources staff or the Campus Ombudsman for advice and assistance regarding addressing grievances.

2. If a training staff member has a specific concern about an intern, the staff member may:

   a) Discuss the issue with the intern.
   b) Consult with the Training Director.
   c) If the issue is not resolved informally;
      i. The staff member may seek resolution of the concern by written request, with all supporting documents, to the Training Director for review.
      ii. When this occurs, The Training Director will consult with the Director and implement Review Panel procedures as described below.

Review Panel and Process

1. When needed, a Review Panel of three members will be formed by the Director with recommendations from the Training Director and the intern involved in the dispute. Review Panel members may be drawn from Counseling, Health and Wellness Services psychology and/or medical staff, or other campus mental health professionals. The intern has the right to hear all facts with the opportunity to dispute or explain the behavior of concern.

2. Within ten business days of receipt of the request for appeal, a hearing will be conducted in which the challenge is heard and relevant material presented.

3. Within five business days of the completion of the review, the Review Panel submits a written report to the Director, including any recommendation for further action. Recommendations made by the Review Panel are to be unanimous.

4. Within five business days of receiving the recommendation, the Director will either accept or reject the Review Panel's recommendations. If the Director rejects the panel's
recommendations, due to an incomplete or inadequate evaluation of the dispute, the Director may refer the matter back to the Review Panel for further deliberation and revised recommendations or may make a final decision.

5. If referred back to the panel, they will report back to the Director within five working days of the receipt of the Director’s request of further deliberation. Then, the Director makes a final decision regarding what action is to be taken.

6. The Training Director informs the intern, staff members involved, and if necessary members of the training staff, of the decision and any action taken or to be taken.

7. If the intern disputes the Director’s final decision, the intern has the right to appeal to the Vice President of Student Affairs and Dean of Students, who will issue a final determination in consultation with Human Resources. The decision of the vice president is final.

Documentation
1. All steps need to be adequately and appropriately documented in a manner consistent with the due process procedures.

2. The Training Director has the responsibility of sending reports that provide feedback to the trainee’s academic program. For each report, the most recent evaluation constitutes the primary basis for comments. In the event there are serious problems with regard to a trainee’s ability to perform counseling duties, incidents of unethical behavior, or particular behavioral/interpersonal difficulties substantiated by supervisory report or appeal, the Training Director will notify the academic program in writing. A copy of any report or letter sent to the intern's academic department will be placed in the intern’s permanent file maintained at Counseling, Health and Wellness Services by the Training Director and the intern’s personnel file maintained in Human Resources.

Acknowledgement of receipt
I acknowledge receipt of the Due Process and Grievance procedure document. I understand as a university staff member, I am subject to all staff and campus-wide policies, and that the procedures outlined in this document are supplemental to those policies and procedures.

Intern signature/date