

Due Process Policy and Procedure

Overview

The Due Process and Grievance Procedures serve to ensure that decisions made by the Internship Program are fair, consistent, and free from personal bias. These procedures are aligned with the accreditation standards set forth by the American Psychological Association (APA). Internship is a period of substantial professional growth, during which interns receive ongoing feedback. Most challenges encountered during this time are expected developmental experiences and are typically addressed through regular supervision. Open dialogue about areas for growth is encouraged as a core component of professional development.

However, when concerns become more serious and reflect inadequate performance or unprofessional behavior, the Due Process Procedure is implemented. This procedure is designed to safeguard the intern's rights and to provide an opportunity for the intern to remediate identified concerns with appropriate support.

Identification of Problematic Behavior

In rare instances, an intern may exhibit behaviors, attitudes, or characteristics that interfere with their professional functioning, the quality of clinical services provided, or their relationships with colleagues and staff. Problematic behavior may include, but is not limited to:

- Failure or unwillingness to incorporate ethical and professional standards, including adherence to the APA Code of Ethics, Pennsylvania State Board of Psychology regulations, and Internship and Consortium policies.
- Inability or unwillingness to develop and demonstrate essential professional competencies.
- Inability or unwillingness to manage personal stress, psychological concerns, or emotional responses that negatively impact professional performance.

Determinations regarding problematic behavior are made through professional judgment by the intern's supervisor(s) and the Training Committee and are distinguished from more routine developmental concerns typically addressed informally.

Problematic behavior is characterized by one or more of the following:

- Lack of insight, denial, or refusal to address concerns when raised.
- Deficits that extend beyond didactic or academic gaps.

- Negative impact on the quality of services.
- Concerns spanning multiple areas of functioning.
- Requiring disproportionate supervisory or staff resources.
- Insufficient response to feedback, supervision, or remediation.
- Potential for ethical violations or legal consequences.
- Risk of harm to clients.
- Disruptive or inappropriate communication with agency personnel.

Procedures for Addressing Problematic Behavior

Step 1: Informal Review

When problematic behavior is identified, the intern's primary supervisor will meet with the intern to discuss the concern and provide:

- Clear examples of the behavior(s) in question.
- Expectations for improvement.
- A defined timeframe for the necessary behavioral adjustments.

The Internship Training Director is notified within five (5) business days of the initial meeting. If the intern successfully meets expectations, this is documented in supervision notes (not part of the intern's permanent file) and reflected in the next formal evaluation. If concerns persist or new issues arise, a Formal Review is initiated.

Step 2: Formal Review

The Formal Review process is triggered when:

- Informal resolution fails.
- Additional or more severe issues emerge.
- A supervisor rates the intern a "1" or "2" on the mid-year evaluation.

Process:

1. The concern is reported to the Internship Training Director.
2. The intern is notified in writing of the identified issue and the initiation of the Formal Review process, including a scheduled Hearing.
3. A hearing is held within five (5) business days, involving the intern, supervisor, and Internship Training Director (or another supervisor if the Director raised the concern). The intern may present a written or verbal response.
4. Within five (5) business days of the hearing, the Training Committee convenes to determine appropriate next steps, which may include:

- a. No Further Action

A summary letter is provided to the intern indicating that no further action is necessary.

- b. Further Action Without Remediation Plan

A letter is issued acknowledging the concern and outlining expectations for improvement. This letter is shared with the intern's academic program.

- c. Further Action With Remediation Plan

A formal remediation plan is developed to address and monitor progress. This plan includes:

- Identification of the problematic behaviors or deficits.
- Specific recommendations for remediation.
- A defined timeframe.
- Evaluation methods to assess success.

The plan is shared with the intern and their academic program and placed in the intern's permanent file.

Remediation Strategies May Include:

- Increased or modified supervision.
- Reflective assignments.
- Reassignment of supervisors or modification of supervisory focus.

- Recommendation for personal therapy or assessment.
- Reduction in responsibilities.
- Additional training or coursework.

Outcome Evaluation:

At the conclusion of the remediation period, the Internship Training Director and supervisor evaluate the intern's progress. A determination is made whether:

1. The intern has sufficiently improved and exits remediation.
2. The intern requires an extension and a revised plan is implemented.
3. The concern persists, warranting consideration of suspension.

Step 3: Suspension

Suspension involves temporary removal from all clinical and direct service activities. During this time, the intern may engage in:

- Enhanced supervision.
- Didactic learning.
- Clinical skills practice.
- Mentorship or other interventions.

A written suspension plan outlines:

- The behavior(s) of concern.
- Required remedial actions.
- A timeframe for completion.
- Evaluation criteria.

At the end of the suspension, a written summary determines whether the intern may resume clinical activities. If reinstated, the intern may remain under probation with a remediation plan.

A change in supervisor may be considered if deemed to enhance the intern's success, pending Training Committee approval. The new supervisor assumes responsibility for the remediation process.

Immediate Suspension or Termination

Immediate termination or suspension may occur in cases of:

- Gross misconduct.
- Serious ethical violations.
- Noncompliance with workplace policies.
- Behavior endangering clients or compromising professional responsibilities.

This decision is made by the Training Committee in consultation with Human Resources and completed within 10 business days of the Formal Review hearing. APPIC and the intern's academic program are notified within five (5) days. Termination may impact the intern's ability to graduate.

Interns are informed during orientation about what constitutes grounds for dismissal, as outlined in site-specific handbooks and HR policies.

Appeals Process

Interns may appeal any decision related to notification, remediation, suspension, or dismissal by submitting a written appeal with supporting documentation to the Family Medicine Residency Program Director (Appeals Chair) within five (5) business days of notification.

Appeal Procedure:

- The Appeals Chair, in consultation with the Training Committee, determines whether to convene a Review Panel or respond directly.
- If convened, the panel includes the Appeals Chair, the Internship Training Director, and one licensed supervisor. (A substitute is designated if the Director is involved.)
- The panel may conduct interviews and review documentation.
- The intern is given the opportunity to present their perspective.
- The panel has 15 business days to complete its review.

- A written decision is issued to the intern within three (3) business days of the panel's conclusion.

Finality:

The decision of the Review Panel is final.