APA/OPCA Update – March 2023

Includes selected articles from the October 2022 Commission on Accreditation (CoA) Update, which is available on the website of the American Psychological Association, CoA / Office of Program Consultation and Accreditation (OPCA).

2022 CoA Meetings

The Commission on Accreditation (CoA) met on the following dates during calendar year 2022: February 2 (new member orientation); February 3-5 (policy); March 30-April 2 (program review and policy); July 14-16 (program review and policy); and October 27-29 (program review and policy). Commissioners are responsible for conducting program reviews and participating in both a "policy panel" and a "work group"; these groups serve to work on policy and procedural issues that the CoA has determined warrant examination. All meetings in 2022 were held in a remote or hybrid fashion.

2022 CoA Program Review Summary

The Commission on Accreditation held its fall 2022 program review meeting from October 26-29, 2022. In the CoA's review of programs during this meeting, decisions were made on 54 programs including 1 applicant program that was awarded an initial accredited status, as well as 126 interim reports submitted by programs. Some of the programs reviewed underwent a virtual site visit while others completed an in-person site visit. Programs that underwent a virtual site visit will host a verification visit for onsite inspection in the future.

The Commission's work groups and policy panels convened during the meeting to review and develop policy matters including implementing regulations with forthcoming public comment or public notice periods and items needed to support the development of master's accreditation.

Decisions from the 2022 fall program review meeting are available on the OPCA's website. Please see the following table for a summary of accredited programs as of October 29, 2022:

Table 1. Number and Type of APA Accredited Programs*

Programs (Level and Area)					Number of Accredited Programs	
Doctoral programs	**Area**	**PhD**		**PsyD**		
		Full	**Cont.**	**Full**	**Cont.**	
	Clinical	174	4	66	11	
	Counseling	64	0	9	3	
	School	58	3	8	3	
	Combined	8	0	4	4	
	Total doctoral programs	**419**				
Internship programs		**Full**		**Contingent**		
		646		13		
	Total internship programs	**659**				
Postdoctoral residency programs	**Area**	**Full**		**Contingent**		
	Traditional - Clinical	94		3		
	Specialty - Clinical Child Psychology	9		1		
	Specialty - Clinical Health Psychology	12		0		
	Specialty - Clinical Neuropsychology	36		7		
	Specialty – Forensic Psychology	1		0		
	Specialty - Geropsychology	3		0		
	Specialty – Rehabilitation Psychology	10		1		
	Total postdoctoral programs	**177**				
Total		**1,255**				

Note. Cont. = Contingent.
*As of October 29, 2022

A Farewell to Departing CoA Members

The Office of Program Consultation and Accreditation wishes to offer a huge thank you and "farewell" to eleven commission members whose terms of service on the Commission on Accreditation (CoA) will be concluding at the end of the year. All these commissioners have contributed immensely to the work of the CoA by working tirelessly to promote quality in health service psychology education and displaying exceptional flexibility during the COVID-19 pandemic.

As they end their tenure, we give a big thank you to the following commissioners for their service:

- **M. Dolores Cimini, PhD,** commission member since 2017
- **William L. Hathaway, PhD,** commission member since 2017
- **Aaron P. Jackson, PhD,** commission member since 2017
- **Adam B. Lewin, PhD,** commission member since 2021
- **Greg E. Manship, DBe,** commission member since 2017
- **Sree Saroj Sainath (Sreenath) Panchagnula,** commission member since 2022
- **Judith E. Patterson, PhD, MN,** commission member since 2017
- **Dinelia Rosa, PhD,** commission member since 2020
- **Jorge G. Varela, PhD,** commission member since 2020
- **Edelyn Verona, PhD,** commission member since 2020
- **Jason D. Williams, PsyD,** CoA chair in 2022, Associate chair – program review in 2021, commission member since 2017

We thank each of these commissioners for their hard work and dynamic efforts; we wish them well in their future endeavors.

COVID-19 Policy and Site Visit Updates

The Commission on Accreditation has extended temporary policy changes regarding short-term program modifications implemented to minimize COVID-19 exposure. These policy changes found on the APA website will continue to be in effect through June 1, 2022. The CoA will also continue to evaluate the appropriateness of these temporary flexibilities beyond June 1, 2022 and will provide updates to programs about such developments.

In 2020, APA CoA began conducting site visits virtually. As a temporary change due to the pandemic, both accredited and applicant programs had virtual site visits. Only virtual visits were conducted through August 2022. However, in the fall 2022 site visit cycle (September – December 2022), in-person visits began for applicant programs, while accredited programs continued with virtual visits. In the winter 2023 cycle (January-May 2023), the CoA will continue conducting virtual visits for some accredited programs but

will expand the number of in-person visits to include both applicant and accredited programs. The CoA increased the number of in-person visits with the hope that it will minimize some of the pandemic-related backlog; site visits are currently delayed by approximately 1 to 2 years.

Please note that all accredited programs with site visit delays maintain accredited status and being subject to a site visit delay will not solely negatively impact a program.

Each program hosting a virtual site visit is followed with a brief in-person verification site visit to meet the statutory and regulatory requirements to perform an on-site inspection. In June 2022, the first verification site visits were completed. Starting in fall 2022, additional programs began having in-person verification visits, with the help of members of the existing APA site visit corp. Click on the following link to find more information on the verification site visit process.

The CoA needs volunteers to become site visitors. If you are interested in becoming an APA site visitor more information can be found here: https://accreditation.apa.org/become-site-visitor

Substantive Change Updates

Consistent with the Implementing Regulations (IR) related to "Notification of Changes to Accredited Programs" (C-27 D, C-24 I, C-20 P) a substantive change [SC] is generally defined as a change that could alter the program's quality and/or impact a program's adherence to the Standards of Accreditation (SoA). Each IR includes some specific examples relevant to each level. Despite these examples, it is not always clear when a program change raises to the level of a substantive change. The Commission understands that programs will evolve and modify training components between periodic reviews, and that not every program modification requires reporting. Ultimately, it is up to individual programs to determine whether a change impacts quality and therefore requires a formal update to CoA.

The purpose of this guidance document is to provide additional information on when a formal substantive change is needed. While some substantive changes are clear (e.g., degree changes, new consortium partners), more minor changes may or may not require reporting. Programs are reminded that all program changes (whether reported to CoA or not) should be reflected in public materials, as appropriate.

Below is a list of common updates with guidance on when a program-level substantive change may (or may not) be needed:

Supervisor/faculty changes [All Levels]

YES
- Program Director (PD) change (to include CV).

- Significant faculty/supervisor changes that may impact the program's ability to meet training aims and/or SoA.

  NO
- Routine changes (departures/hiring) of faculty/supervisors that do <u>not</u> impact the program's ability to meet training aims/SoA. Faculty/supervisor changes will be captured in the Annual Report Online (ARO). CVs for new supervisors/faculty are not typically required (except for PD).
- Changes to other program officials (Institution Head, Department contacts) can be made by the PD on the Users/Officials tab. No need to submit a SC for these updates unless the changes impact program functioning in a significant way.

Modifications to evaluation forms [All Levels]

  YES
- If the program has drastically changed the competencies/elements evaluated. This would likely also require updated PWC and DSK (doc only) tables and a detailed narrative.

  NO
- Minor modifications, such as adding/modifying the elements associated with PWCs and/or changing the minimum levels of achievement (provided they demonstrate appropriate level of practice [i.e., entry-level/advanced]).

Funding Changes [All levels]

  YES
- Loss of funding that may impact ability to meet the SoA and/or training aims.

  NO
- Loss of funding that does not impact program functioning (e.g., does not lead to loss of faculty/supervisors, student/trainee slots, etc.). This will be reported annually in the ARO.
- Increase in funding. This will be reported annually in the ARO.

Modification to Curriculum/Courses [Doctoral]

  YES
- A major curriculum revision (i.e., shift in required courses/syllabi across multiple PWCs and/or DSK).

  NO
- Modification to individual course syllabi across time is expected. If coursework continues to cover the same basic content, updated syllabi need not be reported as a substantive change.

  MAYBE

- New course/methods being used to meet DSK/PWCs. If a program is unsure if a new course/syllabus change will impact the program's ability to meet the SoA, please contact OPCA for consultation prior to submitting a substantive change.

Rotation/Track Changes [Internship/Postdoc]

YES
- New emphasis area/track added or removed (Note: if a track is *temporarily* inactive due lack of trainee placement, etc. – this need <u>not</u> be reported. See below).
- New (never used) rotation site added.

NO
- Supervisor changes within existing site/s (unless changes impact ability to meet SoA/aims).
- Modifications to content of existing rotations/tracks that do not impact ability to meet aims/competencies.
- Existing rotation site becomes inactive/active. Often programs may have a rotation that will be active one year and inactive the next (due to intern interest and/or supervisor availability). As long as the site has been previously reviewed by CoA and resources at the site are consistent with that which has been previously reported, a substantive change is not required annually.

If you are unsure whether a program change should be submitted as a substantive change, please feel free to contact the Office of Program Consultation and Accreditation (OPCA) for guidance. Please review the relevant IR (listed above) for additional information on substantive change.

<u>Disclosure IRs</u>

Per the SoA, the Commission on Accreditation (CoA) requires that all accredited programs communicate its admissions, support, and outcome data with prospective and current trainees. The CoA evaluates a program's adherence to this standard in the context of the SoA sections that outline communication practices required of accredited programs. The CoA made changes to three Implementing Regulations (IRs) related to the disclosure of program information. These IRs are C-26 D, C-27 I, and C-23 P; they refer specifically to the information that programs provide for potential and current trainees, including admissions, support, and outcome data.

The revisions to the CoA's Implementing Regulations (IRs) related to the disclosure of program information are comprised of the addition of an inquiry across all three levels of training (i.e., doctoral, internship, and postdoctoral residency). This inquiry addresses whether the program or institution requires its trainees and faculty/staff to comply with specific policies that express mission and values outside those of which are to be expected for education and training in health service psychology. In addition, the IRs for the internship and postdoctoral levels contain revised listings for trainees who have completed the program; these listings align with those programs provide in the Annual

Report Online (ARO). These changes are presented using a redline method for ease of presentation.

2022 CoA Policy Changes That Impact Program Activity

The CoA has continued to review Implementing Regulations (IR) for master's, doctoral, internship, and post-doctoral residency programs (Section C) and has also reviewed regulations for the Accreditation Operating Procedures (Section D) and those for self-governance of the Commission. Updates from recent reviews at the CoA fall 2022 meeting follows:

AOP

D.4-7(b) Thresholds for Student Achievement Outcomes in Doctoral Programs: This IR was reviewed following revision and receipt of public comment. The revision changed one of threshold criterion levels, the proportion of doctoral students in clinical and counseling psychology programs who had been placed in an accredited[1] internship program. The revised threshold criterion states that at least 75% of students are accepted into an accredited internship program. The proportion, calculated using 3-year average, will identify programs with placement rates at or less than the lowest 5% of all accredited clinical and counseling doctoral programs on the indicator. Like the other threshold indicators, if a program does not meet the criterion, the data will be further examined, and the program could be asked to respond to questions regarding its compliance with accreditation standards. The change was approved for current implementation and can be found in the IR Section D booklet labeled D.4-7(b).

D.4-5 Monitoring of Programs on "Accredited, Inactive" status: The CoA reviewed comments received for revisions to the implementing regulation regarding "accredited, on inactive" status with a focus on the portion of the document that refers to all program levels. This IR was approved for adoption with an immediate effective date located in the IR Section D booklet labeled D.4-5.

Masters

The CoA reviewed Section C IRs, some following a second round of public comment and others following an initial presentation to the public. These IRs are being incorporated into materials that will be presented to the public in the near future. Please see the master's accreditation webpage for developments as the CoA continues to plan for this level of accreditation. Of note, though, the CoA developed one IR to address knowledge specific to the discipline **IR C-7 M** *Discipline-Specific Knowledge,* that is being put forward to the public for comment.

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[1] Accreditation from an agency recognized by the US Department of Education or the Canadian Psychological Association.

Doctoral

IR C-30 D Partnership/Consortium: This IR was reviewed and revised following public comment. The changes are for accredited doctoral level consortium programs undergoing formation, modification or dissolution and include specifics for the development of a consortium if one or more members are currently accredited as an independent program. The IR will be effective January 1, 2023 and can be found in the IR Section C booklet labeled C-30 D.

Internship

C-26 I Accredited, on Contingency: The revision to this IR describes the data submission process to move from contingent to full accreditation, including the number of years of proximal and distal data that are needed. The CoA approved this IR with an effective date of January 1, 2023 and can be found in the IR Section C booklet labeled C-26 I.

Postdoctoral

IR C-22 P Accredited, on Contingency: The revision to this IR describes the data submission process to move from contingent to full accreditation, including the number of years of proximal and distal data that are needed. The CoA approved this IR with an effective date of January 1, 2023 and can be found in the IR Section C booklet labeled C-22 P.