

A-1. Policies for Accreditation Governance

Adopted by the APA Council of Representatives on 18 August 1991

Amended by the Council of Representatives 18 February 1996

Amended by the Council of Representatives 9 August 2006

Section 1: Name and Reporting Line of the Accrediting Body

The governance body responsible for the accreditation of doctoral and internship training programs in health service psychology shall be called the “Commission on Accreditation.” In a manner consistent with the Bylaws of the American Psychological Association, it shall be appointed by and report to the Board of Educational Affairs.

Section 2: Functions of the Commission on Accreditation

The Commission on Accreditation shall be responsible for the accreditation of education and training programs in health service psychology consistent with its recognized scope of accreditation practice, and its published policies, procedures, and criteria.¹ In carrying out that responsibility, consistent with recognition provisions of the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education and the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA), the Commission on Accreditation shall:

1. Formulate and promulgate accreditation policy that is informed by input from review panels, the annual Accreditation Assembly, and the field in general.
2. Make final program accreditation decisions, taking into account the recommendations received from review panels.
3. Manage, staff, and participate in the panel review process.
4. Organize and convene the annual Accreditation Assembly.
5. Maintain and assure quality of the site visitor function and panel review process.
6. Develop and maintain inter-organizational relationships across the full spectrum of psychology education and training entities.
7. Engage in timely and relevant self-studies and self-evaluations for the purpose of enhancing the quality and credibility of the accreditation review process.
8. Hear and adjudicate complaints from individuals and organizations.
9. Participate as prescribed in the accreditation decision appeal process.

¹ In practice, the scope of accreditation to date has been limited to doctoral-level education and training in health service psychology, in the areas of clinical, counseling, and school psychology (and appropriate combinations thereof). In principle, however, it is not limited to these areas.

10. Assure openness and periodic review of policies and procedures to ensure that innovation is supported.
11. Provide appropriate consultative guidance and general information about the accreditation process and its purposes through the Office of Accreditation.
12. Conduct evaluative and developmental research appropriate to accreditation.
13. Appoint program review panels, consultants, and task forces as needed, within policy and fiscal constraints.
14. Maintain the CoA's status as a recognized professional specialty accrediting body with the U.S. Department of Education and the Council for Higher Education Accreditation.

Section 3: Structure of the Commission on Accreditation

Inasmuch as postsecondary accreditation pertains to educational institutions and programs, it is essential that graduate educators have a major voice in formulating policies and implementing the process of accreditation for professional education and training. At the same time, there must be appropriate balance of representation from practitioners of the profession, as well as representation of the general public's interest by persons outside the professional discipline who have an informed, broad gauged community perspective about matters of higher education. These are fundamental principles pertaining to the composition of accrediting bodies in the professions, and it is upon these that the structure of the Commission on Accreditation is based. One additional principle is that appointments to the Commission shall reflect the individual and cultural diversity within our society among psychologists, and the breadth of psychology as a discipline.

There shall be no fewer than 32 persons appointed to the Commission on Accreditation. To achieve appropriate balance between academic institutions and programs, practitioners of the profession, and the publics served by accreditation, appointments to the Commission on Accreditation shall represent in addition the following domains of perspective and responsibility with regard to professional education and training in psychology, each of which is essential to the balance of viewpoints expected in accrediting bodies and their activities:

Domain I – Breadth of the Scientific Discipline of Psychology (N=5)

I.A. Academic leadership for graduate education in the discipline of psychology at the departmental level of administration or higher

- Four seats nominated by the executive board of the Council of Graduate Departments of Psychology (COGDOP)

I.B. Representative of the core scientific activities of the discipline of psychology

- One seat nominated jointly by the Association for Psychological Science and the Board of Scientific Affairs of the American Psychological Association (APS/BSA).

Domain II – Professional Education and Training in Psychology (N=16)

II.A. Training program leadership (N=5)

- One seat nominated by the board of the Association of Psychology Postdoctoral and Internship Centers (APPIC)
- One seat nominated by the board of the Council of Counseling Psychology Training Programs (CCPTP)
- One seat nominated by the board of the Council of Directors of School Psychology Programs (CDSPP)
- One seat nominated by the board of the Council of University Directors of Clinical Psychology (CUDCP)
- One seat nominated by the board of the National Council of Schools and Programs of Professional Psychology (NCSPP)

II.B. Leadership in professional education (N=1)

- One seat nominated jointly by the Board of Educational Affairs of the American Psychological Association and the National Council of Schools and Programs of Professional Psychology (BEA/NCSPP)

II.C. Professional peers nominated from program review panels (N=10)

- One seat nominated by the appropriate nominating authority from each group of program review panels for the varied areas and levels of training in health service psychology that are accredited.
 - Doctoral Panels (5)
 - One seat nominated by the Academy of Psychological Clinical Science (APCS)
 - One seat nominated by NCSPP
 - One seat nominated by CCPTP
 - One seat nominated by CDSPP
 - One seat nominated by CUDCP
 - Internship Panels (4)
 - Two seats nominated by APPIC
 - Two seats nominated by other organizations involved directly in internship training
 - Post-Doctoral Panel (1)
 - One seat to be determined through an open solicitation for nominations from organizations involved directly in postdoctoral training (e.g., CoS, APPIC)

Domain III – Practitioners of the Profession Representing Independent, Institutional, and Specialized Practice (N=5)

III.A. Independent and institutional practice (4)

- Two seats representing institutional practice and two seats representing independent practice will be nominated jointly by APA's Board of Professional Affairs and Committee for the Advancement of Professional Practice (BPA/CAPP).

III.B. Specialized practice (1)

- One seat nominated by the Council of Specialties (CoS).

Domain IV – Representatives of the Public Interest (N=3)

IV.A. General Public (N=2)

- Nominations for both seats to be solicited at large by the CoA from a broad range of education and public interest groups with nominees to be persons with breadth of community perspective and leadership experience who are not psychologists.

IV.B. Public Interest: Individual and Cultural Diversity (N=1)

- One seat to be determined from an open solicitation of nominations, including from BAPPI, for a psychologist who brings scholarly expertise on issues of individual and cultural diversity in the context of advancing the science and practice of psychology in public service for appointment to a three-year, non-renewable term.

Domain V – Graduate Student Consumers of Education and Training (N=1)

- One seat nominated by the board of the American Psychological Association of Graduate Students (APAGS) for appointment to a one-year term.

Open Seats (N=2)

Without regard to the Domains identified above, the CoA will solicit nominations from groups, organizations, and individuals to identify psychologist nominees for two open seats. Appointments will be made from the range of nominees for three-year, non-renewable terms to allow for greater flexibility and responsiveness to the development and evolution of the field and to provide opportunities to be informed by the annual Accreditation Assembly. Initially, on a three-year cycle, one nominee for an Open Seat will be appointed in each of the first two years, followed by an appointment of a nominee from Domain IV.B, Public Interest.

Section 4: Guidelines for the Nomination and Appointment Process

- a) Nominations shall be solicited by the Board of Educational Affairs from the appropriate organizations annually for all vacancies to be filled, as specified in Section 3 of this document, in accordance with procedures and timelines for APA governance nominations.
- b) Three names shall be submitted for each vacancy, with supporting information pertaining to each candidate. Should a call for nominations result in no response, following due notice the Board of Educational Affairs shall appoint an individual or individuals of its own choosing appropriate to the domain at issue.
- c) There shall be a three-year term for each member appointed, with eligibility for a maximum of two consecutive terms of service. Terms shall be staggered within each domain such that all seats in that domain shall not be vacant at the same time.²

² The student member is an exception to the three-year term as described in Section 4(d).

- d) The student member shall be a graduate student in good standing admitted to doctoral candidacy from a program accredited by the APA. Appointment of the student member shall be for one year and shall be eligible to be reappointed for two additional years.
- e) Appointments shall reflect individual and cultural diversity and the breadth of psychology as a discipline. In this regard, the Board of Educational Affairs shall review the balance of appointments across all domains and report annually to Council on the outcome of such review.

Section 5: Policy and Procedural Authority

- a) The Council of Representatives, having full power and authority over the affairs and funds of the Association, has overall authority for accreditation policy. The Council exercises this authority directly when broad or major policies are concerned. On other matters, Council delegates authority to the Board of Directors for approval and implementation of practices consistent with Association policy.
- b) The Board of Directors, serving as the administrative agent of the Council, exercises approval authority for accreditation policy and procedural changes, except as otherwise described herein. The Board of Directors, through the Chief Executive Officer, shall ensure that accreditation policies and practices do not violate other policies of the Association, do not exceed authorized budget, and do not expose the Association to undue legal risk.
- c) The Board of Educational Affairs shall be responsible to Council, through the Board of Directors, for maintaining consultation with and general oversight of the Commission on Accreditation on matters of accreditation policy and procedure. It shall appoint members to the Commission on Accreditation in a manner consistent with the Association Bylaws, as specified in this document, and shall serve as the appointing authority for ad hoc accreditation appeal panels. It shall appoint one of its members annually to serve as a non-voting member on the Commission on Accreditation for purposes of policy consultation between the Board of Educational Affairs and the Commission on Accreditation.
- d) The Commission on Accreditation shall be responsible for formulating, promulgating, and implementing accreditation policies, procedures, and criteria following appropriate public notice, public hearings, and approval. Such public notice shall include the members of the Council of Representatives, the Board of Directors, and the Board of Educational Affairs, as well as those persons and programs potentially affected by any proposed changes in accreditation policies, procedures, or criteria. The Commission on Accreditation shall be solely responsible for making final accreditation decisions on professional education and training programs in psychology. In a manner consistent with policies and recognition provisions of the Council of Higher Education Accreditation, the Commission on Accreditation shall have authority for the administration of accreditation practices within the guidelines of its recognized scope of practice and its published policies, procedures, and criteria for accreditation. On an annual basis, the Commission shall elect its own chair.