

Standard justification language for internship sites accepting students from PCSAS-only accredited doctoral programs

Rationale/need:

With regard to student selection, the CoA Standards of Accreditation for internship programs state the following:

"They are currently enrolled in a doctoral program accredited by an accrediting body recognized by the U.S. Secretary of Education or by the Canadian Psychological Association. If the internship accepts an intern from an unaccredited program, the program must discuss how the intern is appropriate for the internship program."

This suggests that internships must justify selection of students from programs that are solely accredited by PCSAS.

Justification:

Interns from PCSAS-accredited programs are not only appropriate for the internship program, but are highly qualified based on their education, training, and experience. Below is supporting information re: PCSAS accreditation.

1. PCSAS (<https://pcsas.org/>) is an established accreditation agency that engages in rigorous accreditation processes for clinical science doctoral programs

- PCSAS currently accredits 49 doctoral programs, four of which currently are, or will be, solely accredited by PCSAS.
- PCSAS programs must adhere to a clinical science training model — one that supports and expands the scientific foundation for mental and behavioral health care and increases the quality and quantity of clinical scientists contributing to all aspects of public health for all people.
- PCSAS is recognized by the Department of Veterans Affairs, and all VAs are required to accept students from PCSAS-accredited programs into their internships.

2. PCSAS accredited programs are held to very high standards and those standards are in line with those of APA accredited programs (<https://pcsas.org/the-pcsas-accreditation-process/>)

- Both organizations (PCSAS and APA CoA) accredit clinical psychology education and training programs

- Both organizations have rigorous accreditation standards and program review procedures
- Both organizations require programs to train students in accepted professional competencies (research; ethical and legal standards; individual and cultural diversity; professional values, attitudes, and behaviors; communication and interpersonal skills; assessment; intervention; supervision; consultation and interprofessional/interdisciplinary skills)
- Both organizations require students to complete pre-doctoral clinical training and a pre-doctoral clinical internship
- Both organizations are recognized by APPIC, and their students are eligible to participate in the Match

3. Students trained in PCSAS accredited programs get rigorous, high-quality, integrated research and clinical training

- All students from PCSAS-accredited programs must be fully prepared for the clinical internship that is required of all students.
- The PCSAS review criteria state specifically that: “Students must acquire clinical competence through direct application training, including well organized and monitored science-based practicum and internship experiences.”

4. Students trained in PCSAS accredited programs are highly successful in matching for internship, passing the EPPP, and going on to productive clinical science careers that include research, clinical, and dissemination activities

In data from 2023 (<https://pcsas.org/wp-content/uploads/Clinical-training-report-and-appendix-3-30-25.pdf>):

- 72.6% of graduates from PCSAS-accredited programs engaged in clinical practice in their current position(s)
- 95% of graduates from PCSAS-accredited programs matched in Phase 1 of the APPIC match
- 98% of graduates from PCSAS-accredited programs passed the EPPP