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FASP Internship Compensation Policy Statement 2014

The Florida Association of School Psychologists (FASP) recognizes the importance of high-quality internships as the culminating graduate training experience. Internship is a vital opportunity to integrate acquired knowledge with applied professional competencies. The development of rigorous and effective internships requires a strong collaboration between students, university training programs, and sponsoring school districts. Each entity has a critical role in making the internship process successful to assure entry-level professionals are well-qualified for their careers in school psychology. The role of students includes openness to feedback, a strong work ethic, diligence in performing only duties for which they are qualified, keeping supervisors informed of their activities, and reflective vigilance in developing their own skills. The role of university training programs includes assuring foundational knowledge and preparedness for internship; guiding students' scholarly achievement; monitoring compliance with state and national best practice guidelines; and serving as liaisons among the universities, students, and internship supervisors. The role of the internship sites is to provide high-quality supervision, to monitor acquisition of skills, to provide mentoring for interns, and to assure fair acknowledgement of and expectations for the development and work of interns.

Historically, the school districts of Florida have consistently and generously provided a wide range of internship opportunities for graduate students. In addition to general practice experiences, a plethora of specialized training rotations have also been offered for interns, including bilingual and neuropsychological assessment, low-incidence disabilities intervention, cognitive-behavioral therapy, early childhood assessment, and RtI/MTSS systems-level leadership training. The range of school programs and settings has included charter schools, E/BD centers, alternative education programs, and intensive spectrum services. All of the sites offer supervision by certified school psychologists and most also provided supervision by licensed school psychologists and/or licensed psychologists. Thus, FASP would like to recognize the important contributions and dedication of Florida leaders in providing high-quality internship experiences for our future school psychologists.

Preserving the quality and integrity of Florida's School Psychology internships is a priority for FASP. Given significant national economic difficulties over the past several years, it has come to the attention of FASP that some interns within the state match system are not reimbursed for their work-related expenses and/or compensated for their services. While acknowledging the significant value of internship opportunities that districts provide and also recognizing the realities of strained budgets,

FASP urges proactive measures in assuring that interns' work-related costs and basic compensation remain a priority consideration. This is especially important since internships for school psychologists must be full-time for at least a 1200 hour academic year (1500-2000 hours for doctoral candidates). Consequently, unpaid internships constitute an enormous financial burden on individual interns.

Both the American Psychological Association (APA) and the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) offer best practices standards for internships that include provision of required supplies/materials, reimbursed work-related expenses, and compensation commensurate with the intern's skill level and contributions to the site. FASP also endorses a policy of assuring interns are appropriately compensated for their services. More specifically, the following provisions are noted:

- Interns are provided a written contractual agreement that delineates compensation prior to beginning internship and informed of those provisions prior to accepting an internship match
- Interns are provided all work-related materials/supplies (e.g., computer, printers, office supplies, travel mileage for distant sites, psychological evaluation tests and protocols) or reimbursement for those costs
- Interns are provided a stipend or base salary that is consistent with the skills and services delivered on behalf of the site's constituency.
- Interns are covered by worker's compensation for job-related injuries

National Guidelines

National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) Guidelines (2009):

1.3 The internship site, university program, and intern have a written agreement* that includes a clear statement of the expectations and responsibilities of each party (including total hours and duties to be performed by the intern), benefits and support to be provided by the internship site, and the process by which interns are to be supervised and evaluated.

4.3 The internship site provides office supplies, materials, travel reimbursement, and other support similar to that provided to school psychologists in the district/agency. Sites are strongly encouraged to provide interns a stipend that recognizes their graduate level of training and the value of services they provide (Prus, 2009).

Council of Directors of School Psychology Programs (CDSPP) Guidelines (2012):

3. The internship agency provides a dated written statement, brochure, or website that describes the goals and content of the doctoral internship program, states clear expectations for the quality of trainees' work, training, and supervision, and is made available in advance to prospective interns. The internship agency, preparing institution, and intern have a written agreement that describes the goals and content of the internship including clearly stated expectations for the nature of experiences offered in the agency

and for the quantity and quality of the work. Each intern is given a written statement that includes salary, benefits, reimbursable travel, holidays, and other relevant data.

American Psychological Association (APA) Guidelines: (2014, IR-C9)

C-9. Intern Funding (Commission on Accreditation, October 1981; revised March 1992, November 2001, July 2011). This Implementing Regulation clarifies the CoA's interpretation of Domain C.3(a) of the Guidelines and Principles (G&P) for internship programs regarding: unfunded internships, the sufficiency of intern stipends, and the equity of stipends.

The Commission on Accreditation (CoA) strongly discourages the use of unfunded internship positions.

Unfunded Internships The Commission on Accreditation (CoA) strongly discourages the use of unfunded internship positions. The CoA understands, however, the rare or unusual circumstance in which the award of an additional unfunded internship would serve to alleviate unavoidable hardship for the potential unfunded intern candidate (e.g., remaining geographically close to an ailing family member, etc.). Examples of less clearly defensible rationales would be elective geographic preference or the specific theoretical persuasion of a desired internship program or supervisor.

The CoA is in full support of internship positions being equitably funded; however, it will consider exceptional program and individual circumstances in which a program can offer quality training despite a lack of funding. In such cases, the "burden of evidence" lies with the program to demonstrate that the lack of funding does not adversely affect morale or quality of training. In circumstances in which the case for an unfunded internship would seem to be compelling, the responsibility for documenting and the accountability for articulating the rationale for the placement rest with the doctoral and internship programs, jointly. The APA Office of Program Consultation and Accreditation staff is always available for consultation, but the decision to accept unfunded interns rests with the program alone. The awarding of such positions should be documented fully in both the doctoral and internship programs' annual reports to the CoA, and the program should anticipate that site visitors may make focused inquiry into the case circumstances resulting in the ad hoc creation of an unfunded internship position.

Under virtually all "exceptional" circumstances, it would be the CoA's expectancy that single or individual cases would be the source of such unfunded internships, but events can occur (e.g., closure of a nearby internship) that might constitute the kind of extraordinary circumstance necessitating the creation of more than one unfunded position in a given training year. However, in the view of the CoA, the routine or regular granting of one or more unfunded internship positions would not adhere to the spirit of the present CoA policy. Programs also are enjoined to avoid the explicit or implicit communication to applicants or potential applicants that unfunded internship placements might be

negotiable during recruitment at any point during the recruitment cycle. Again, maneuvers by a program and student to create the appearance of a special need after the recruiting season has ended will not be seen as consonant with the spirit of the policy.

Sufficiency of Funding

The payment of a stipend is a concrete acknowledgement that an intern in the agency is valued and emphasizes that there is a significant training component in addition to experiential learning. While recognizing that internship stipends will not rise to the level of salaries for permanent staff psychologists, it should also be clear that compensation needs to be sufficient so as to avoid imposing an undue hardship upon the intern in terms of basic living needs.

Internship training should be funded so as to: (1) lend tangible value to the intern's service contribution; (2) communicate a valid and dignified standing with professional/trainee community; and (3) be set at a level that is representative and fair in relationship to both the geographic location and clinical setting of the training site. Stipends should be reasonable in comparison to other accredited internship programs in the local area. Wherever possible, basic support for health/medical insurance should be in place to protect the welfare of interns and their families. Internship programs should communicate to CoA any intentions to substantially decrease interns' stipends, in accordance with Implementing Regulation C-19.

Stipend Equity

The CoA continues to encourage uniform stipends across positions within internship programs, including consortia or otherwise. Consistent with the Guidelines and Principles for Accreditation, the CoA recognizes that, unless there are exceptional circumstances, the resources of a consortium are expected to be pooled, including compensation for interns. In certain exceptional cases, the CoA recognizes that resource inequities might exist. In these cases, the CoA encourages the programs to identify how resources might be pooled across consortium participants in such a way that comparable intern compensation can be achieved.

Association of Psychology Postdoctoral and Internship Centers (APPIC) Guidelines (2011):

16. The program has the necessary financial resources to achieve its training goals and objectives. Intern stipends shall be reasonable, fair, and stated clearly in advance. Unfunded internship positions are allowable only in unusual and infrequent circumstances.

Clarification: APPIC requires internship positions to be equitably funded across the site. Intern stipends shall be set at a level that is representative and fair in relationship to the geographic location and clinical setting of the training site. Stipends should be reasonable based on a comparison with other APPIC member programs in your area. Unfunded or poorly funded internship positions are allowed only in unusual and infrequent circumstances in which the creation of such a position would serve to alleviate a hardship for the potential intern candidate. The "burden of evidence" lies with the program to demonstrate that the lack of funding does not adversely affect morale or quality of training. In addition, training resources should be sufficient to afford the same training for an unfunded or poorly funded position as for fully funded positions.

The payment of a stipend is a concrete acknowledgment that a trainee in the agency is valued and emphasizes that the primary task of the year is educational in nature. Stipends are generally lower than a salary received by a regular employee and implies that there is a significant training component in addition to experiential learning. Stipends are equal among trainees unless there is an extenuating circumstance (e.g., specialized skills, consortia agreements). This distinction between trainee and regular employee emphasizes that an internship is "an organized training program", in contrast to supervised experience or on-the-job training.

References

American Psychological Association, Commission on Accreditation. (2014). *Policy statements and implementing regulations*. Author.

Association of Psychology Postdoctoral and Internship Centers. (2011). *APPIC membership criteria: Doctoral psychology internship programs*. Houston, TX: Author.

Council of Directors of School Psychology Programs. (2012). *Doctoral internship guidelines*. Author.

Prus, J. S. (2009). Best practice guidelines for school psychology internships. *Communiqué*, 37(8). DC: National Association of School Psychologists.