



The Alaska Psychology Internship Consortium (AK-PIC)

Due Process Procedures

Grievances about Interns

For situations in which a supervisor or other faculty member raises a grievance about the behavior of a psychology intern:

Definition of Problem Behavior

For purposes of this document, intern problem is defined broadly as an interference in professional functioning which is reflected in one or more of the following ways: 1) an inability and/or unwillingness to acquire and integrate professional standards into one's repertoire of professional behavior, 2) an inability to acquire professional skills in order to reach an acceptable level of competency, and/or 3) an inability to control personal stress, psychological dysfunctions, and/or excessive emotional reactions which interfere with professional functioning.

It is a professional judgment as to when an intern's behavior becomes problematic rather than of concern. Trainees may exhibit behaviors, attitudes or characteristics that, while of concern and requiring remediation, are not unexpected or excessive for professionals in training. Problems typically become identified as impairments when they include one or more of the following characteristics:

- 1) the intern does not acknowledge, understand, or address the problem when it is identified,
- 2) the problem is not merely a reflection of a skill deficit which can be rectified by academic or didactic training,
- 3) the quality of services delivered by the intern is sufficiently negatively affected,
- 4) the problem is not restricted to one area of professional functioning,
- 5) a disproportionate amount of attention by training personnel is required,
- 6) the trainee's behavior does not change as a function of feedback, remediation efforts, and/or time,
- 7) the problematic behavior has potential for ethical or legal ramifications if not addressed,
- 8) the intern's behavior negatively impacts the public view of the agency,
- 9) the problematic behavior negatively impacts the intern class



Informal Review

When a supervisor believes that an intern's behavior is becoming problematic, the first step in addressing the issue should be to raise the issue with the intern directly in an attempt to informally resolve the problem. This process should be documented in writing, but will not become part of their professional file.

Formal Review

If an intern's problem behavior persists following an attempt to resolve the issue informally, or if an intern receives a rating of a "2" on a broad domain within a supervisory evaluation, the following process is initiated:

- A. The supervisor will meet with one or both of the Co-Training Directors (C-TD) and intern to discuss the problem and determine what action needs to be taken to address the issue. If the one of Co-Training Directors is the intern's direct supervisor, both Training Directors will be included in the meeting.
- B. The intern will have the opportunity to provide a written statement related to his/her response to the problem.
- C. After discussing the problem and the intern's response, the supervisor and Training Directors may:
 - 1) Issue an "Acknowledge Notice" which formally acknowledges a) that the faculty is aware of and concerned with the problem, b) that the problem has been brought to the attention of the intern, c) that the faculty will work with the intern to specify the steps necessary to rectify the problem or skill deficits addressed by the inadequate evaluation rating, and d) that the problem is not significant enough to warrant serious action.
 - 2) Place the intern on "Probation" which defines a relationship such that the faculty, through the supervisors and C-TD, actively and systematically monitor, for a specific length of time, the degree to which the intern addresses, changes and/or otherwise improves the problematic behavior or skill deficit. The probation is a written statement to the intern and the Director of Clinical Training at the trainee's graduate institution and includes:
 - a) the actual behaviors or skills associated with the problem,
 - b) the specific recommendations for rectifying the problem,
 - c) the time frame for the probation during which the problem is expected to be ameliorated, and
 - d) the procedures designed to ascertain whether the problem has been appropriately rectified.



- 3) In special cases, the intern may be moved to another training site within AK-PIC. This option would be applicable in situations in which it is believed that the intern's difficulties are the result of a poor "fit" between the intern and the training site, and that the intern could be successful in a different placement. This option would require a meeting of a review panel convened by the C-TDs and the intern's primary supervisor, and at least one other members of the Training Committee. Additional parties who are knowledgeable about the intern's abilities may be involved in order to inform decision making.
 - 4) Document the problem and take no further action.
- D. If the problem is not rectified through the above processes, or if the problem represents gross misconduct or ethical violations that have the potential to cause harm, the intern's placement within AK-PIC may be terminated. The decision to terminate an intern's placement would be made by the entire Training Committee and would represent a discontinuation of participation by the intern within every aspect of the consortium.

Hearing

If the intern wishes to challenge the decisions made, he or she may request a "Hearing" before the Training Committee at any point in the above process following step C. If requested, the Hearing will be conducted by a review panel convened by the C-TDs and consisting of the C-TDs, the intern's primary supervisor, and at least one other member of the Training Committee. The intern may request a specific member of the Training Committee to serve on the review panel. The review panel will review all written materials and have an opportunity to interview the parties involved or any other individuals with relevant information. The review panel may uphold the decisions made previously or may modify them. The review panel has final discretion regarding outcome.

- E. If either the Acknowledgment Notice or the Probation action occurs, the C-TDs will inform the intern's sponsoring university, indicating the nature of the inadequate rating, the rationale for the action, and the action taken by the faculty. The intern shall receive a copy of the letter to the sponsoring university.
- F. Once the Acknowledgment Notice or Probation is issued by the C-TDs, it is expected that the status of the problem or inadequate rating will be reviewed no later than the next formal evaluation period or, in the case of probation, no later than the time limits identified in the probation statement. If the problem has been rectified to the satisfaction of the faculty and the intern, the sponsoring university and other appropriate individuals will be informed and no further action will be taken.



Grievances by Interns

These guidelines are intended to provide the psychology intern with a means to resolve perceived conflicts. Interns who pursue grievances in good faith will not experience any adverse professional consequences. For situations in which an intern raises a grievance about a supervisor, staff member, trainee, or the internship program:

Informal Review

First, the intern should raise the issue with the involved supervisor, staff member, other trainee, or one of the Co-Training Directors in an effort to informally resolve the problem.

Formal Review

If the matter cannot be satisfactorily resolved using informal means, the intern can submit a formal grievance in writing to a C-TD. If a C-TD is the object of the grievance, the grievance should be submitted to uninvolved Training Director. The individual being grieved will be asked to submit a response in writing. The Co-Training Directors will meet with the intern and the individual being grieved within 10 business days. This meeting may be held in person or via videoconference. In some cases, the C-TDs may wish to meet with the intern and the individual being grieved separately first. The goal of the joint meeting will be to develop a plan of action to resolve the matter. The C-TDs will document the process and outcome of the meeting. The intern and the individual being grieved will be asked to report back to the C-TDs in writing within 10 business days regarding whether the issue has been adequately resolved.

If the plan of action fails, the C-TDs will convene a review panel consisting of themselves and at least two other members of the Training Committee. The intern may request a specific member of the Training Committee to serve on the review panel. The review panel will review all written materials and have an opportunity to interview the parties involved or any other individuals with relevant information. The review panel has final discretion regarding outcome. If the review panel determines that a grievance against a staff member has merit, then the issue will be turned over to the employer agency in order to initiate the due process procedures outlined in the employment contract.