

Clinical Psychology Ph.D., Program Retention and Evaluation Policy

Faculty, training staff, supervisors, and administrators of the Psychology and Counseling graduate programs at the University of Texas at Tyler have a professional, ethical, and potentially legal obligation to: (a) establish criteria and methods through which aspects of competence other than, and in addition to, a student-trainee's knowledge or skills may be assessed (including, but not limited to, emotional stability and well-being, interpersonal skills, professional development, and personal fitness for practice); and, (b) ensure, insofar as possible, that the student-trainees who complete our programs are competent to manage future relationships (e.g., client, collegial, professional, public, scholarly, supervisory, teaching) in an effective and appropriate manner. Because of this commitment, and within the parameters of our administrative authority, our faculty, training staff, supervisors, and administrators strive not to advance, recommend, or graduate students or trainees with demonstrable problems (e.g., cognitive, emotional, psychological, interpersonal, technical, and ethical) that may interfere with professional competence to other programs, the profession, employers, or the public at large.

As such, within a developmental framework, and with due regard for the inherent power difference between students and faculty, students and trainees should know that the faculty, training staff, and supervisors of our programs will evaluate their competence in areas other than, and in addition to, coursework, seminars, scholarship, or related program requirements. These evaluative areas include, but are not limited to, demonstration of sufficient: (a) interpersonal and professional competence (e.g., the ways in which student trainees relate to clients, peers, faculty, allied professionals, the public, and individuals from diverse backgrounds or histories); (b) self-awareness, self-reflection, and self-evaluation (e.g., knowledge of the content and potential impact of one's own beliefs and values on clients, peers, faculty, allied professionals, the public, and individuals from diverse backgrounds or histories); (c) openness to processes of supervision (e.g., the ability and willingness to explore issues that either interfere with the appropriate provision of care or impede professional development or functioning); and (d) resolution of issues or problems that interfere with professional development or functioning in a satisfactory manner (e.g., by responding constructively to feedback from supervisors or program faculty; by the successful completion of remediation plans; by participating in personal counseling/therapy in order to resolve issues or problems).

[Adapted from the Comprehensive Evaluation of Student-Trainee Competence in Professional Psychology Programs statement developed by the Student Competence Task Force of the APA Council of Chairs of Training Councils (CCTC), (<http://www.apa.org/ed/graduate/cctc.html>), approved March 25, 2004.]

Formation of a Faculty Hearing Panel

Student problems and concerns can be referred to a Faculty Hearing Panel (here after known as the Committee) for review and recommendations. The Committee can be formed following the Graduate Student Annual Review of Progress (GSARP), following a request from a faculty member, or following unsatisfactory resolution of previous problems. The Faculty Hearing Panel will consist of three faculty members from the student's discipline, although a fourth member outside the discipline may be added from either the department or another department at the discretion of the Department Chair. This ad hoc Faculty Hearing Committee will be appointed by the department chair as requested by the DCT and CPPC. The Committee will notify the student of the reasons why he or she is not making satisfactory progress or meeting program standards.

Furthermore, the student will have the opportunity to meet with the Committee to respond and present information and witnesses. The Committee will also meet with the program director/faculty or faculty member who referred the student to the Committee. After considering the matter, and within 15 working/business days of meeting with the student, the Committee will report to the student and the department chair, their written recommendations. The Committee may make recommendations, such as placement on watch or warning status, placement on probation, a recommendation for dismissal, and/or placing restrictions or conditions on the student's continuance in the program. The specific recommendation(s) is made directly to the Clinical Psychology Program Committee (CPPC) which will vote on whether to accept the recommendation from the Committee. The CPPC will implement the recommendations, develop the remediation, and monitor compliance and resolution. Within 15 working days of receipt of the faculty recommendations, the student will notify the Chair of the Department of Psychology and Counseling, in writing (paper or email from UT-TylerPatriot account) of the acceptance of or intent to appeal the Committee's recommendation.

Evaluating Student Fitness and Performance

Members of the clinical faculty, using professional judgment, continuously evaluate each student's fitness and performance. Students receive information related to their fitness and performance from faculty members, their advisors, and their supervisors. The criteria used by the faculty to make such judgments include instructor's observations of course performance, evaluations of students' performances in simulated practice situations, supervisors' evaluations of students' performances in practice situations, and the disciplines' codes of ethics. Students are formally evaluated at least annually by the clinical program faculty functioning as the CPPC. The progress of every graduate student in the Ph.D. program is assessed annually through the Graduate Student Annual Review of Progress, conducted by clinical and other program faculty. Student progress is reviewed in terms of academic performance, clinical skill development, professional/ethical dispositional development and other indicators. The review may include meetings of students with faculty. Written results of the review are provided to every student. Detailed information about procedures for student annual progress review, retention, and for addressing concerns about student progress are available at the department website: <http://www.uttyler.edu/psychology/> and in the program handbook.

Graduate Student Annual Review of Progress (GSARP) Procedures

All Clinical Psychology Ph.D. students will be reviewed by the clinical and other relevant program faculty in the spring/summer semester of each academic year.

1. For each student, faculty will gather information on GPA and other academic and professional development as part of the review process. Ratings from practicum and internship supervisors will be reviewed and skills/competence will be assessed using the SCSE-PhD or SCSE-Internship. Work products, paper rubrics, and other ratings of performance will be reviewed as needed. Faculty will use the Graduate Student Annual Review of Progress (GSARP) Qualtrics instrument as the primary document for the annual review. Please see *Graduate Student Annual Review of Progress* (Appendix L).

- Academic Course Performance (GPA)
- Research Skills
- Clinical Skills I: Intervention
- Clinical Skills II: Assessment
- Professional Responsibility
- Ethical Responsibility

- Sensitivity to Diversity and Individual Differences
- Interpersonal/Communication Skills
- Underserved Populations
- Other activities and accomplishments
- Readiness for Practicum Placement
- Ratings from Practicum Activities
- Progress on Thesis and Dissertation
- Overall Rating
- Remediation Recommendations, if needed

2. Two weeks before their evaluation, all Clinical Psychology PhD students are required to submit a current vita with all research and clinical activities for the year listed and described, a report/transcript of their grades, and a report on their progress on the thesis/dissertation project to the DCT. The DCT will compile the information and submit to the CPPC for review and discussion.

3. For each GSARP domain, the CPPC will discuss each student using all available information and then assign a rating for that area of development. The categories of performance will be: Exceeds Expectations, Meets Expectations, Does Not Yet Meet Expectations, Does Not Meet Expectations (Failure), or No Basis for Rating. Where possible, behavioral descriptions of the domain shall be used. When any rating is lower than Meets Expectations, specific indicators that are the basis for the rating will be included as comments on the GSARP.

4. After the GSARP individual domains are completed, program faculty will assign an overall rating for student progress. The overall ratings will be: Exceeds Expectations, Meets Expectations, Does Not Yet Meet Expectations, or Does not Meet Expectations (Failure).

5. If a student receives an overall or specific competency rating lower than Meets Expectations, then there will be a decision on specific remediation steps to address any concerns. The remediation steps will be consistent with the watch, warning, or probation and/or dismissal categories are described in detail below. Decisions of probation and/or dismissal will be referred to the Faculty Hearing Panel for review, but the CPPC can recommend any form of remediation or notification status if needed; the recommendations of the Faculty Hearing panel are submitted to the CPPC. Warning and Probation statuses require a written remediation plan.

6. Completed GSARP forms will be sent to each student to formally communicate the results to them, within 2 weeks of conducting the review.

7. Students will be provided a copy of their completed GSARP report and will return a signed copy to the department within 2 weeks of receiving their report. Students will discuss and review the evaluation results with their advisor and the DCT if needed. Students who disagree with their evaluation and review will follow the university and department policies governing the appeal process.

8. Information from the GSARP will be used to update the clinical program competencies checklist in order to enhance training activities. Student GSARP reports will be maintained electronically in the student's academic file while in the program.

Remediation and Disposition of Student Problems and Concerns

Student problems and concerns can be addressed in a variety of ways. There are informal and formal methods of student remediation. There are three levels of remediation available which are

labeled 1) Watch, 2) Warning, and 3) Probation and/or Dismissal.

A recommendation for dismissal usually occurs after the Faculty Hearing Panel reviews the information and makes this recommendation to the CPPC. Any level of remediation can arise at any time during the academic year, following the Graduate Student Annual Review of Progress, or based on the request of a departmental or program faculty member. To help prevent these types of situations, all new students are required to acknowledge receiving the program handbook, the Clinical Psychology PhD Student Code of Conduct, and are familiar with the professional expectations and responsibilities while in the program. Students also acknowledge that the program follows the APA and ASPPB Code of Ethics, state laws regarding the practice of psychology, and all relevant university policies and procedures. It is expected that students follow all ethical guidelines when conducting their professional and academic duties.

Watch Status

This is an informal status within the clinical program and can occur at any time during the academic year. It is usually based on a single issue or concern with a faculty member, supervisor, or other program member working directly with the student. The problem or issue can be addressed and corrected in an informal manner between the student and faculty/program member. The plan is documented between the specific faculty member and student and the DCT is notified of the situation and plan. The plan is kept with the faculty member overseeing the concern or issue. Since this is a plan developed by the student and faculty member it is not part of the student's official record. Examples of situations falling under the watch category include:

- Failure to begin or maintain progress on thesis or dissertation projects.
- Obtains an incomplete in course work.
- Demonstrates problems in a single practicum site, in a specific class (e.g., paper not acceptable and needs revision), or in a specific area of competence related to class performance or performance on practicum or internship duties (e.g., lack of professionalism; continued disrespect).
- Annual Evaluation scores or practicum/internship evaluations (SCSE) in which the overall rating or rating in a single domain is Does Not Yet Meet Expectations. This reflects a single area of concern that can be remediated with additional training and supervision.

Warning Status

This status is an indication that faculty are concerned about student performance or progress. Warning status can arise from the Graduate Student Annual Review of Progress or following a hearing by the Faculty Hearing Panel. Warning status is accompanied by a written remediation plan and the student must attend and remediate the problematic behavior in order to return to good standing. The warning plan is kept by the DCT and is not part of the student's official record. Examples of situations falling under the warning category include:

- Overall GPA falls below a 3.25.
- An overall annual evaluation score of Does Not Meet Expectations in one academic year; a Does Not Meet Expectations in a single domain of performance on the

Annual Evaluation; Two or more Does Not Yet Meet Expectations domain ratings in a single year.

- One or more practicum/internship supervisors indicate areas of concern (multiple Does Not Yet Meet Expectations or a single Does Not Meet Expectations) with the student's performance based on written evaluations (SCSE-PhD or SCSE-Internship).
- Obtains two incompletes in course work.
- Continued lack of progress on thesis or dissertation projects
- Failure to comply with Watch status recommendations.
- Failing the Clinical Qualifying Exam
- Obtaining a grade of C in a required clinical or departmental course
- Problems across multiple areas and settings that indicate serious problems that need formal remediation (e.g., dismissal from a training/practicum site). These can include persistent absences and tardiness, consistently late course work, poor course performance, poor research progress, poor performance in training activities (e.g., assistantship), multiple deficits in practicum/internship performance, frequent cancellations of client and supervision appointments or meetings, or other unprofessional behavior.

Probation Status and/or Program Dismissal

Probation status is a serious category of student remediation and may involve a program or departmental recommendation for program dismissal. Probation status can arise following the Graduate Student Annual Review of Progress or following the Faculty Hearing Panel. Probation can be with or without a recommendation for dismissal depending on the specific situation. Students may move from Warning status to Probation status if continued problems are demonstrated or if the Warning status plan is not completed satisfactorily. The formal written probation remediation plan is part of the student's official record and may be reportable to other agencies. The department and program may dismiss students from their degree programs for continued failure to make satisfactory progress toward degree completion, 2 grades of C or below, multiple grades of incomplete, failure of 2 qualifying exams, overall GPA below 3.0, or serious ethical, academic, and/or professional violations. Students may be dismissed for serious and/or harmful violations of the ethical and professional standards contained in the various ethical codes regulating psychology, the Clinical Psychology PhD Program Code of Conduct, or relevant university policies. Decisions for dismissal will follow departmental guidelines and involve a Faculty Hearing Panel and recommendation to the CPPC. Students on Probation may NOT enroll in, begin, or continue their practicum course(s) until the probation has been removed. Examples of situations falling under the Probation and/or Dismissal category include:

- Overall GPA below 3.0 (This triggers automatic academic probation by the Graduate School)
- Overall GPA below 3.25 following Warning status notification.

- An overall annual evaluation score of Does Not Meet Expectations in two consecutive or two non-consecutive academic years. Multiple and continued Does Not Meet Expectations in individual domains of performance on the Annual Evaluation are grounds for probation or dismissal.
- Three or more incompletes in course work
- Two grades of C in program or departmental course work or Failure to Obtain a C or of B or higher following a C grade in the same course.
- Any grade of D or F
- Failure of a second Clinical Qualifying Examination
- Failure to satisfactorily complete a warning status remediation plan for course work, training, research, or practicum/internship performance problems.
- Serious Ethical, Academic, and Unprofessional Behavior that violates the ethical and professional standards of behavior.

Appeals Process for Program Level Decisions

Decisions regarding a student's official status within the program are handled based on the following guidelines. All students have the right to due process regarding decisions made in the program.

Watch, Warning, Probation or Dismissal Decisions If the student appeals the Program's or Committee's recommendations, the Department Chair, after considering the Committee's recommendation and after meeting with the student, will determine whether the student will be allowed to remain in the program. The Chair need not meet with the student before making a decision if the Chair has given the student a reasonable opportunity to meet and the student has either failed or refused to meet. The student will be notified of the Chair's decision in writing within fifteen working days of the chairperson's meeting with the student. If the student is dissatisfied with the Chair's decision, he or she may appeal to the Dean of the College of Education and Psychology. However, in order for an appeal to the Dean to be considered, the student must submit a written notice for an appeal to the Dean within fifteen working days of receiving the Chair's decision. The Dean will consider the matter based on results compiled by the Department Chair and notify the student of his or her decision within 15 working days of his/her receipt of the appeal from the Chair. The final appeal step is with the Provost or Vice President of Academic Affairs.