

The School Psychology

INTERNSHIP TOOLKIT



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Introduction

ABOUT THIS TOOLKIT

PURPOSE

This toolkit was designed to support school psychology graduate students in preparing for, securing, and succeeding in their internships. The internship is a cornerstone of graduate education in school psychology (National Association of School Psychologists [NASP], 2020). By providing explicit guidance and resources to support graduate students in navigating the internship process, this toolkit promotes school psychology graduate students' competence within Domain 10 (Legal, Ethical, and Professional Practice) within the NASP (2020) *Model for Comprehensive and Integrated School Psychological Services* (the NASP Practice Model).

INTENDED USE

This toolkit is intended for use by graduate students in both specialist- and doctoral-level training programs, with one section (Internship Pathways for Doctoral Students) offering specific guidance for prospective doctoral interns.

This toolkit may be used in various ways and contexts, including but not limited to:

- Independent use by individual graduate students
- Coordinated use by graduate students within peer consultation or supervision
- Supervisor-mediated use within university- or fieldwork-based individual or group supervision
- Advisor-mediated use within an academic advising process

RELATED RESOURCES

For further reading on this topic, consider referencing the following:

- Baird, B. N., & Mollen, D. (2018). *The internship, practicum, and field placement handbook: A guide for the helping professions* (8th ed.). Routledge.
- Joyce-Beaulieu, D., & Rossen, E. (2015). *The school psychology practicum and internship handbook*. Springer Publishing Company.
- Kiser, P. M. (2012). *The human services internship: Getting the most from your experience* (3rd ed.). Cengage Learning.
- National Association of School Psychologists. (2020). *The professional standards of the National Association of School Psychologists*. <https://www.nasponline.org/standards-and-certification/nasp-2020-professional-standards-adopted>
- Newman, D. S. (2020). *The school psychology internship: A guide for interns and supervisors* (2nd ed.). Routledge.
- Williams-Nickelson, C., Prinstein, M. J., & Keilin, W. G. (2019). *Internships in psychology: The APAGS workbook for writing successful applications and finding the right fit* (4th ed.). American Psychological Association.
- Zakszeski, B. N., & Dubow, E. (2018). Gearing up for internship: Tips for future applicants. *Communiqué*, 47(7), 35.

OVERVIEW OF THE SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGY INTERNSHIP

In school psychology graduate programs, a year-long internship provides a culminating experience and the opportunity to integrate numerous aspects of your education. Many consider this to be the most important part of training in school psychology.

An internship enables you to practice and integrate skills with support from field-based supervisors and university program faculty. In addition to the professional experiences they provide, internships are required for school psychology certification and licensure from national and state credentialing agencies.

The internship is a collaboration between the student's training program and the field site. Both university and fieldwork supervisors must agree in writing on the responsibilities of the training program and internship site for providing supervision, support, and evaluation.

Pursuing Internships in School Psychology

Parking Lot

A parking lot is used in trainings and meetings to park questions or ideas to explore later. Use the boxes below to write down questions for specific individuals as you read the toolkit.

| My Advisor | My University Supervisor |
|---|--|
| <p>What internship sites would be most helpful for my career goals?</p> <p>What internship sites would be the best fit for my existing training experiences and goals?</p> <p>Review application materials.</p> | <p>Where have previous students generally done their internships?</p> |
| My Field Supervisor | My Program Peers |
| <p>Ask whether field supervisors know any of the supervisors at internship sites I'm applying to.</p> <p>Ask about their internship experiences.</p> | <p>Ask to review application materials.</p> <p>What are some typical questions they may have been asked during interviews?</p> |
| My Partner/Family | Someone Else |
| <p>Would you be willing to move to this internship location?</p> <p>Would you be able to find a job at this internship location?</p> <p>How far away is internship location from family?</p> | <p>Ask to review application materials.</p> |

INTERNSHIP STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES

The process for acquiring an internship varies by training program and state. Some programs have designated internship sites where students are regularly placed, some programs work individually with students to select an internship, and others may provide guidance as students quasi-independently apply to internship opportunities. Before you begin your search for an internship, check with your program director or advisor to learn more about program internship requirements and application processes. Your internship must be approved by your graduate program.

The following are some of the most frequently asked questions regarding the school psychology internship.

Is an internship required for state-level/regional credentialing in school psychology?

Most states and territories have school psychology certification or licensure options that authorize professionals to work as school psychologists in that region. All school psychologists must obtain the necessary locally governed credentials to practice school psychology. In most states, school psychology credentialing is overseen by the state department of education, and a supervised internship is required to obtain certification or licensure.

Generally, NASP training standards and Nationally Certified School Psychologist (NCSP) requirements for internship will meet the requirements of individual states. However, it is important to determine any additional requirements for internship that might exist for the area in which you'd like to work.

What are the NASP training standards for a school psychology internship?

Comprehensive information regarding the NASP training standards is available in the latest version of the NASP Professional Standards (NASP, 2020). Many requirements fall into the categories listed below:

- **Duration:** The internship should be completed on a full-time basis over 1 year or a half-time basis over 2 years (1,200 hours, with at least 600 hours of the internship completed in a school setting or 600 hours completed prior to internship in an approved, comparable, formal fieldwork experience).
- **Documentation:** To show that the internship was part of an organized program of study, it must be recognized by your graduate institution via institutional documentation. In other words, academic credit for the internship must appear in some form on your graduate school transcript.
- **Supervision:** Interns must receive an average of at least 2 hours of field-based supervision per full-time week from a credentialed school psychologist (or an appropriately credentialed/licensed psychologist if in a nonschool setting).
- **Support:** The school system or internship agency must provide support for interns commensurate with that provided to professional school psychologists.

What are the Nationally Certified School Psychologist (NCSP) requirements for a school psychology internship?

NCSP internship requirements mirror the NASP training standards (see above). Some states accept the NCSP credential in place of state-specific requirements for internship, coursework, and examination when applying for state certification. Contact your state's department of education to confirm specific requirements.

Do internship guidelines differ for specialist and doctoral students?

Consult the specific internship guidelines provided by your training program to identify whether there may be differences in expectations and requirements for students on specialist and doctoral tracks. According to the NASP training standards, doctoral internships must include at least 1,500 hours (compared to the 1,200 hours required for specialist-level internships). In general, however, doctoral students often encounter additional considerations as they plan, select, and complete their school psychology internship given (a) internship opportunities available only to doctoral students (such as

internships within the Association of Psychology Postdoctoral and Internship Centers [APPIC] or increased number of hours required for internship), (b) credentialing opportunities available only to doctoral students (such as state-level licensure in psychology), and (c) potential requirements for supervision by a doctoral-level school psychology supervisor. These considerations are described in the section “Internship Pathways for Doctoral Students.”

DEVELOPING TRAINING GOALS AND PREFERENCES

Internships may differ from district to district, school to school, and even from supervisor to supervisor. They offer varying degrees of hands-on experience, opportunities to practice or refine an area of interest, pathways to permanent positions, networking opportunities, and compensation. Because the internship is such an important component of your education, you should consider a variety of factors in deciding where to apply and eventually where to accept an offer.

Much consideration goes into deciding what type of internship opportunity to pursue. In addition to selecting an internship opportunity that meets the requirements of your graduate program and any state, regional, or national credentials you would like to pursue, you must prioritize internship opportunities well-suited to help you advance on your desired career path and achieve your long-term career goals. You will want to consider the type of training experiences you are seeking (e.g., balance of assessment, consultation, and intervention services) as well as the setting in which you would like to complete the internship (e.g., school, clinic, consortium, or hospital; recall, however, that you must complete at least 600 hours of school-based experience during your internship or in a program-approved preinternship fieldwork experience). On a practical level, you will need to consider your geographic preferences and restrictions (e.g., some programs require students to complete internships in specific sites or regions) in addition to factors related to compensation (e.g., Will you be able to afford living in this area? If the internship is unpaid, how will you support yourself?).

Use the planning worksheet on the pages that follow to assist you in identifying your internship goals and preferences.

Example: Identifying Internship Goals and Preferences

| |
|--|
| 1. What are my professional interests? |
| <p>I am interested in data-based decision making, especially with regard to students needed additional supports/services (Tier 2 and Tier 3).</p> <p>I want to work within a school district that embraces comprehensive role of school psychologists (opportunities to consult with teaching staff, collaborate with interdisciplinary teams).</p> |
| 2. What areas of my current professional role(s) do I enjoy? |
| <p>I enjoy working directly with learners—love to see their progress, especially when it comes to data.</p> <p>I also really enjoy working and collaborating across a multidisciplinary team of professionals and empowered families and learners.</p> |
| 3. What are my professional strengths? |
| <p>I'm able to build rapport well with learners, their families, and other stakeholders.</p> <p>My understanding and dedication to comprehensive approach to school psychology (NASP Practice Model).</p> |
| 4. What are my professional areas for improvement? |
| <p>Variety of assessment experience is limited in different assessment models and implementation fidelity.</p> <p>Coursework that did not align with practicum experience with regard to application of evidence-based practices in assessment and intervention in the field.</p> |
| 5. What are my short-term professional goals (i.e., next 1–5 years)? |
| <p>To gain applied experiences in evidence-based practices in school-based setting (i.e., behavioral interventions across all tiers of MTSS).</p> <p>To deepen my understanding of assessment and accurate identification of learners with specific learning disabilities.</p> |
| 6. What are my long-term professional goals (i.e., beyond 5 years)? |
| <p>To supervise future school psychology practicum students, and later school psychology interns.</p> <p>To remain in similar district and increase proactive, system-wide crisis support and SEL instruction.</p> |
| 7. How might my internship ... |
| <p>Align with my professional interests?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Opportunities to work across tiers? Various learner populations?• Reference to comprehensive model—in materials? Application? Interviews? Response to those questions I ask during interview (prep 2–3 broad and 1 situational)? <p>Allow me to continue engaging in areas of my current professional role that I enjoy?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Opportunities to counsel learners (mention of model within materials/interview)?• Providing direct services to learners and/or families?• Opportunities to consult with teaching staff for specific learners? Teams of professionals?• Teaming opportunities? Roles of families and learners in meetings (i.e., IEP, 504, child study team)? |

Enable me to work on professional areas for improvement?

- Are tentative supervisors competent in the areas of improvement?
- Have I accurately sought out placements that allow opportunities for growth in this area? Have I shared my current level of functioning transparently and why this site would be a good fit for my growth?

Support me in achieving my short-term professional goals?

- Opportunities to assess with supervision of new model
- Didactics existing? If so, what is the structure?
- Model of supervision and ongoing professional development for internship site?

Support me in achieving my long-term professional goals?

- Needed ongoing professional development? CEUs?
- Licensure/certification requirements for future goals?

8. What are the specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART) goals will I set for my internship experience?

By the end of my internship year, I will collaborate with interdisciplinary teams to provide evidence-based assessments and interventions and ensure student-centered programming, as evidenced by at least two artifacts (i.e., psychoeducation reports, intervention or treatment plans, or counseling notes).

In midst of full-time internship year, I will use positive self-talk, coping strategies, and self-care techniques to handle stressful situations or work demands in which I manifest anxious or withdrawn behaviors (i.e., negative self-talk, excessive social media consumption), demonstrated by engaging in a 30-minute activity or situation in a calm and positive manner in 2/3 occasions.

9. What am I looking for in an internship?

Type(s) of Setting: School district with opportunities for rotations across grade levels (i.e., elementary, secondary)

Type(s) of Service Delivery: trauma-informed care, counseling, consultation

Population(s): Interested in working with students from bilingual households and/or minoritized populations

Opportunities for Professional Development: Evidence-based practices related to bilingual assessments and interventions

Opportunities for Supervision: Embraces the DEP supervision model

Other Desired Attributes/Opportunities: Regional considerations, opportunities for advancement

IDENTIFYING INTERNSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

The process for identifying potential internship placements is individualized. The way you go about it will likely be unique to you, based on your personal goals, program requirements, and other individual preferences (e.g., location, pay). Once you have established the parameters for what you are looking for in an internship, the next step is locating internship opportunities that fit these needs. There are several ways to do this, including:

- *Learning from others.* Talk to other graduate students who are either on or have recently completed their internships. They can tell you about their experiences, including the advantages and disadvantages of choosing different types of sites.
- *Reaching out to potential sites directly.* Contact point people at sites to determine if intern positions are available. In school systems, a lead school psychologist, a director of student services, or related personnel may be good contacts to start with. In some organizations, a director of training may be explicitly identified on organization materials.
- *Contacting professional organizations.* Reach out to your local or state school psychology organizations to identify internship position postings or contacts.
- *Using NASP's Career Center.* Look for listings in the NASP Career Center or in other professional newsletters or online databases.
- *Visiting the Convention Hall.* Visit booths hosted by recruiting school systems and organizations at the exhibit hall at the NASP annual convention.
- *Searching the internet.* Look for internship postings on school systems' or organizations' websites.
- *Using social media.* Follow potential internship sites on social media both to learn more about the system or organization and to watch for position postings.
- *Visiting the APPIC website.* If you are in a doctoral program and interested in an APPIC internship, visit the APPIC website for descriptions and contact information on available internships.

APPLYING TO INTERNSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

After you identify an internship opportunity that interests you, you may need to complete an application. Internship sites, particularly public school districts, vary widely in their processes. Some may be quite informal, while others may have formalized application and interview processes. Although application requirements may vary, a small number of application components are commonly requested.

Cover Letter

In the context of the internship application process, the cover letter lets an internship site know you are interested in being an intern there. Keep in mind that a substantial part of your internship will likely require writing, so the cover letter is one of the first opportunities in which you can make a good impression. There are many online resources you can reference to learn how to write a professional cover letter. Your college or university's career center may have helpful resources, too. Remember that clear and concise communication is important. Avoid trying to sound smart; using syntax that is not natural to you can be confusing for the reader.

Curriculum Vitae or Résumé

Verify whether the site expects a curriculum vitae (CV) or a résumé. A CV is a document used to record career accomplishments and achievements. There are no page limits on CVs. By contrast, typically a résumé is limited to one or two pages and highlights only those experiences and credentials considered most relevant to a desired position. To learn more about preparing a CV, refer to the Graduate Student Fact Sheet [Bringing Your Vita to Life: Preparing for Internship and Early Career Positions](#).

Transcript

You will likely need to request a copy of your transcript to be sent to the organization. Many universities use electronic services to coordinate the ordering and delivery of transcripts. Even when electronic, this process can take a few days, though, so do not wait until the last minute to make your request.

Letters of Recommendation

Sites are likely to request between one and three letters of recommendation as a part of your application. Note that letters of recommendation are replaced with the Standardized Reference Form in the APPIC application process (see “[Internship Pathways to Doctoral Students](#)”).

In some cases, sites may specify whom letter writers should be (e.g., academic advisor, former fieldwork supervisor). In other cases, sites may leave the selection entirely up to you. Take time to consider the best people to write you a letter of recommendation. Select people who know you well enough to write a personalized letter. Also select people who can speak to your professional experiences and competencies, especially those experiences and competencies that may be pertinent to the internship site. It can be helpful to invite letter writers who represent multiple aspects of your work, for example a combination of current/former field supervisors who have observed your applied work and school psychology program faculty who can speak to your content knowledge. What would you want your letters of recommendation to say about you, and who is best positioned to say that?

Ensure you give your letter writers ample time to prepare the letter in advance of your application deadline (i.e., at least a month). Specifically, reach out to your letter writers and ask about their willingness to write you a letter with the context and deadline in mind. When a letter writer agrees to prepare you a letter of recommendation, consider giving that person a copy of your CV or résumé, a list of any accomplishments not listed on the CV or résumé, and any pertinent information you know about the organization and position to which you are applying. For example, if you have experience with trauma counseling and you know the organization is interested in hiring school psychologists who have experience in this area, it may be helpful for your reference to know you have a skill set that specifically meets the needs of the organization.

Writing Sample

Sites may request a writing sample as a part of your application. Note that any writing sample submitted must be deidentified, meaning all identifying information about stakeholders and settings must be redacted from the sample that is submitted. A writing sample might be an evaluation report, a consultation case description, a counseling plan or progress notes, or professional development resources you developed. Be sure to supply your best work, but think about what is best through the lens of the organization. For instance, if you know the organization focuses on multitiered systems of support (MTSS) and de-emphasizes psychological evaluations, consider submitting permanent products from MTSS consultation experiences (e.g., a program evaluation report, manual, or handbook you developed).

Essay

Some organizations may ask you to respond to a specific prompt or set of prompts regarding your professional conceptualizations and experiences. For example, if you are a doctoral student who is applying to an APPIC internship, essays are required (see “**Error! Reference source not found.**”). Often, application essays will carry a word limit (e.g., 500 words within the APPIC system), which will force you to choose your words precisely and intentionally. Afford yourself plenty of time to draft your essay responses and seek feedback on your writing from trusted advisors, peers, or writing centers on campus.

General Suggestions

- Before you submit your application, ask a peer to review your materials. Do not hesitate to ask the reviewer to attend to specific things (e.g., Does this section flow? Is this transition smooth? Have I clearly and adequately represented my experiences?). Take advantage of grammar check features and apps available in word processing documents and online.

- Most colleges and universities have career resource centers. Check the website or reach out to the center directly to see whether they have staff who help students develop or review application documents.
- Share your resources! You can learn a lot about preparing applications by reviewing examples. Ask previous students who have been through this process if they have application materials (e.g., cover letters, CVs, essays) you could reference before crafting and finalizing your own materials.
- Remember that the application is your time to shine! It can be uncomfortable to write about your accomplishments and toot your own horn. Don't be afraid to highlight the great things you have done while also conveying that you are a learner who looks forward to both learning from and contributing to the organization.

It is important that you are a good fit for the organization and that the organization is a good fit for you. This means you may not be asked to interview by some school systems/organizations, and that is fine. It is just part of the process. Keep your head up and keep trying!

INTERVIEWING FOR INTERNSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

For many applicants, the interview is among the most intimidating steps of pursuing an internship in school psychology. Whereas you likely were able to take significant time and seek the input of others in carefully constructing your cover letter, CV, essays, and work samples, the interview requires you to think on your toes and independently provide timely and thoughtful responses to questions.

Internship sites hold interviews in a variety of formats, with a range of focal questions and activities. The recommendations that follow generally apply to the variable interview situations encountered by school psychology intern applicants.

Before the Interview: Know Before You Go

Learn about the internship site and position.

Review the internship position posting and any other site materials (e.g., recruitment brochures, internship manuals) that are available to you. Visit the site's webpage when possible, exploring the mission, values, and current initiatives of the site; identifying the strengths, needs, and demographics of stakeholders; and familiarizing yourself with staff names and positions. If you are unable to locate much information about your site and position, consider contacting your site's point person to request additional information or to speak with the site's current intern(s). Ideally, you will have taken these measures prior to applying to the site; however, you may have applied to the site some time before receiving your interview offer, and you may have forgotten site-specific information during this waiting period.

Your goal in reviewing these materials is to assess what you know and what you would like to know about the internship site and position. This will allow you to enter your interview feeling prepared and to identify questions to ask during the interview.

Develop a list of questions about your internship site and position.

As you review internship site and position materials, make a list of questions that remain for you, and take this list with you to your interview day. Throughout your interview day, you will be able to add and eliminate questions as you learn new information (e.g., during interview information sessions or informal conversations with site staff). You may also wish to ask the same question to different people (e.g., a current intern and a current supervisor) to get different perspectives.

Preparing and maintaining this list of questions will serve dual purposes. First, it will ensure that you get all your questions answered during interviews. Even if you have thought of many questions to ask your interviewers, without having a list to which you can refer, you may forget these questions in the moment while potentially experiencing nervousness or excitement. Second, it will support you in presenting as prepared, interested, and invested in the internship opportunity. Interviewers often provide ample opportunities for interviewees to ask questions, and they may interpret interviewees as unprepared, disinterested, or uninvested if interviewees have no, few, or unsubstantial questions to ask when prompted. Err on the side of listing more questions than you expect to have time to ask.

Some questions to consider include:

- What are the expectations for interns? What are the responsibilities of interns? Are they supervised closely, or are they given more independence in their practices?
- What type of supervision do interns receive? From how many people? How frequently? In individual or group formats?
- How many interns are employed at a given time? Are there opportunities for interns to communicate and collaborate?
- In how many settings are interns placed? With what kinds of populations will interns interface? What types of opportunities might I have to [engage with this type of desired stakeholder population]? What is the expected caseload?
- What percentage of time do interns typically spend in assessment-, intervention-, and consultation-related activities? Do interns typically encounter other types of responsibilities? What types of opportunities might I have to [engage in this type of desired experience]?
- What are the short- and long-term goals of the department/organization? How are interns expected to contribute to these goals? What is a mistake or situation that served as a learning experience for this department/organization?
- How are interns evaluated? Is there a formal feedback process? How does it relate to university evaluation procedures?
- What are the characteristics or traits of successful interns at this site?
- Is there workspace available for the intern? What equipment will be made available?
- Will the intern be able to meet the requirements for specific training programs and credentials?
- What opportunities are there for interns to attend conferences and other professional development activities?

Review your application materials.

Although often overlooked in interview preparations, studying your own application materials prior to the interview can be particularly helpful. Interviewers are likely to ask you questions about any of the information you provided.

Think about those fieldwork and research experiences you included on your CV and be prepared to discuss past events in appropriate levels of detail, with confidential information redacted. Sharing personal stories that demonstrate your knowledge and skills can be powerful demonstrations of your qualifications for an internship position. In addition, read through any essays or work samples you submitted with your application, refamiliarizing yourself with the content or cases.

Some questions to consider in advance:

- Tell us about yourself.
- Why did you decide on a career in school psychology?
- What do you see as your strengths and weaknesses?
- What are your experiences working with different populations (e.g., disability categories, culturally and linguistically diverse clientele)?
- What are your expectations and goals for your internship?
- What, if any, gaps do you see in your training?
- What do you like to do for fun? What are your interests and hobbies outside of school psychology?

Review best practices.

Internship interviews commonly include questions about hot topics and key issues in school psychology—particularly those that relate to the potential responsibilities of the school psychology intern.

For many, if not all, of these hot topics and key issues, your prior coursework and fieldwork will have sufficiently prepared you to answer such interview questions. Referencing the internship position posting, the [NASP Practice Model](#), [School Psychology: A Blueprint for Training and Practice III](#), and [NASP's Self-Assessment for School Psychologists](#) may assist you in identifying any gaps in your training. If you perceive a gap in your training that is relevant to the intern position for which

you are applying, you may choose to consult resources such as NASP [fact sheets](#) and [position statements](#). This may prepare you to effectively answer best-practice interview questions while also honestly representing your training experiences and present competencies.

Interviewees may encounter best-practice questions targeting subject matter and posing hypothetical scenarios relating to:

- Approaches to assessment and intervention
- Strategies for communicating and collaborating with families and staff
- Crisis response procedures
- Ethical and legal obligations

Plan your interview attire.

Dress for success! First impressions are important. Although there is no official dress code for interviews, your internship interview attire is likely to be more formal than what you will be wearing while on internship. When in doubt, consider erring on the side of more formal than informal. It can be tricky to determine the typical dress code and norms of an organization that is new to you, and it is completely acceptable to ask your interview site contact for guidance on expectations ahead of time.

Choose your outfit in advance. Don't wait until the night before to make sure that you have, for example, a coordinating suit or appropriate shoes. If you need to purchase new pieces or accessories, do so far in advance of your first interview. If you are traveling to interviews, ensure you have packed all the necessary elements to your interview outfit. If you are traveling by airplane, consider packing these materials in carry-on luggage to avoid a crisis if any checked bags get lost.

Determine what personal items you will actually need during the interview. To the extent possible, limit the number of items you take with you into the site and interview room. For example, if you have driven to the site, can you leave your sunglasses or coat in the car? If you must take luggage or other personal belongings with you into the site, what items do you truly need to access during a formal interview? Often a portfolio, pen, and notebook are all that are needed.

Prepare your professional materials.

Consider taking a professional portfolio including copies of your CV or résumé with you to interviews. Depending on your site and its application requirements, you might also choose to take with you work samples or other materials that evidence your qualifications for the intern position. It is a good idea to have a portfolio prepared in case an interviewer is not familiar with your materials. You may also refer to materials if you are asked a question about your CV or a work sample. For more information on creating your professional portfolio, see the fact sheet [Developing Your Professional Portfolio: Work Samples and Résumés](#). In addition to these materials, be sure to take with you the list of questions about your internship site and position that you have prepared.

Learn about the interview format.

In some cases, you may receive information from your internship site about interview procedures. In other cases, you may request this type of information from your internship site or from contacts who previously interviewed at this site. You may feel better prepared and more relaxed if you are familiar with the interview format and expectations before entering the interview room. For example, you might seek responses to the following questions:

- *How many people will be interviewing me?* Many internship interviews are conducted by a panel of individuals, such as a director of psychological services, school psychologists, and school administrators. You may find it helpful to know ahead of time if you will be walking or videoconferencing into a room of 2, 4, or 12 individuals.
- *How many people will be interviewing with me?* Some internship sites hold group interviews, in place of or in addition to individual interviews, wherein multiple applicants are interviewed at the same time. Some applicants may be surprised by a group interview request and have had limited previous experiences with this type of request. If you are aware of this interview format ahead of time, you may choose to role-play this type of scenario ahead of the actual interview.

- *What tasks are required?* Most internship sites will ask you questions about school psychology and your experiences, but some may also require you to complete a writing sample or case analysis during the interview. Knowing these things ahead of time may prevent you from being surprised by any task asked of you.
- *Is there a time limit?* Some locations may hand you a list of questions and expect you to answer them in a limited period (e.g., 30 minutes). Be sure to ask ahead of time if there is a time limit, allowing you to plan your response length. This action will also indicate that you are organized and manage your time well.
- *Is the interview virtual or in person?* Many sites may continue to use virtual interviews in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. Many of the tips for in-person interviews are still relevant for virtual interviews.

Practice, practice, practice!

Rehearse responding to questions you expect to be asked by yourself or with the help of someone else. Although it may feel somewhat awkward at the time, hearing your responses aloud will likely increase your preparedness and comfort level when you are responding to questions during an actual interview. Individuals such as your faculty advisor, fieldwork supervisor, or program colleagues may be willing to serve as mock interviewers. Don't be afraid to ask! Practicing your responses with another individual allows you to seek feedback about your interpersonal style and responses. Timing out your introductions and responses may help you feel more comfortable and fluent during the interview.

During the Interview

Effectively cope with any stress or anxiety you may experience.

For many, the largest challenge in interviewing is managing nervousness to interact with others and respond to questions as effectively as one might in a lower-stakes scenario. Do not let the weight of the situation wear you down. Keep yourself grounded in the present and reassured of your professional competence.

As a school-psychologist-in-training, you are likely familiar with coping and relaxation strategies, which you may have taught to students or other clientele in your fieldwork. Keep those strategies in your toolbox for your own use! Would a deep breathing, visualization, or muscle relaxation strategy help you calm your nerves before entering an interview? Apply your knowledge of human behavior and mental health to enable yourself to be maximally successful and comfortable during internship interviews.

Show off your social skills.

Maintain eye contact throughout the interview. Speak to all interviewers in the room, not only to the person asking the question. Smile, have fun, and show your excitement for the internship position and site as well as for the field of school psychology. Use active listening strategies and seize opportunities to generate discussion by building off others' ideas or expressing agreement and elaborating with original ideas.

Present yourself as confident but not smug when you enter your interviews. As a result of your training, you are likely prepared for any questions they will ask of you. When you feel confident, you appear confident; this is an attractive trait for potential employers. Remember, however, that you are a student and that there is a lot you have left to learn while you are on internship. You are not expected to know everything or have experienced everything. Explicitly tell your interviewers what you are hoping to learn on your internship.

Interview your interviewers.

During the internship interview, you are tasked with not only selling yourself as a viable intern; you must also seek information about the site and position so that you may choose the internship that best fits your needs, interests, and goals.

When given the opportunity, seek information from your interviewers and other site staff in a respectful manner, honoring their time as well as the prescribed interview format and schedule. This is when you can reference the question list you developed prior to the interview and updated throughout the day. Be sure to avoid asking redundant questions with the

same individuals but consider posing some of the same questions to different parties to assess additional perspectives on the same topic.

Some interviews may, for a variety of reasons, uncover a poor fit between the applicant and the site. Leverage the interview process to strategically evaluate your fit with the internship site.

Following the Interview

Document your perceptions of the internship site and position.

After completing your interview, it is important for you to reflect on your perceptions of the intern roles and responsibilities, the levels and types of support available to the intern, and the (mis)match between your internship goals and the intern position. Note any unanswered questions or concerns you have about the site. Is there additional information you require? How does this site/position stack up to any others for which you have already interviewed? If you are interviewing at multiple sites, developing a spreadsheet where you can document what you have learned at each site can be helpful in keeping sites distinct, and weighing subsequent decisions.

Express gratitude to the appropriate parties.

Following your interview, you may choose to email your internship site contact(s) to thank them for their time and efforts. The interview process is a lot of work for you, as the interviewee, but it is a lot of work for the interviewing staff, too! The thank-you note is also a great opportunity to ask any additional questions you may have and promote recognition of your name among the hiring staff. You can also indicate any specific things that made a positive impression on you during the interview. Do not be surprised, though, if you do not receive a response to your email: Your site contact(s) may be interviewing a lot of applicants (and receiving many emails), and some sites may have restrictions or guidelines on follow-up communications with applicants. Not receiving an email reply does NOT mean your interview went poorly.

Reflect on and note lessons learned.

Interviewing for your internship presents many of the same issues as interviewing for your first full-time job. For both you need to be prepared and confident, answer questions concisely yet openly, ask good questions, be a good listener, and be able to articulate your goals as a professional. When interviewing for your first job, however, you will have the significant advantage of having worked for a full year on your internship as well as having already completed the interview process for your internship.

Recording important details you learned during your internship interviews might help prepare you for your next big interview. For example, what questions did interviewers ask that you were not expecting? What responses did you provide that you found to be effective or well-received? Do you wish you would have prepared for interviews in any other way?

Use the worksheet provided on the page that follows to document your takeaways.

Looking Ahead: Applying for Early Career Positions

Although it is difficult to predict the format of interviews for permanent school psychology positions, many of the above recommendations will apply to these as well. Your internship experience may help you pinpoint those job characteristics that are most important to you. Remember to ask about the work environment and the amount of support that exists among psychologists. Determine what mentoring opportunities are available from more experienced psychologists, and feel free to ask questions about salary, benefits, vacations, and resources.

Example: Postinterview Reflections

Complete this worksheet as soon as possible following each interview to guide your decision-making and performance improvement.

| 1. What would be the pros and cons of accepting this internship position? | |
|--|---|
| Pros | Cons |
| Focus on autism assessment and intervention Opportunities to supervise practicum students Diversity in population Administrative support (e.g., get own testing room, laptop) Collegial relationships between faculty and interns | Location: would have to move to a new city with few familial supports Few postdoctoral opportunities and support Interns seem somewhat dissatisfied Questionable work–life balance |
| 2. How would accepting this position allow me to reach my goals? | |
| Some research opportunities that would allow me to increase exposure to applied research, possible manuscript and presentation opportunities, etc. | |
| 3. How did I do? | |
| <p>Content Questions I was asked/topics I addressed:</p> <p>What’s your favorite part of the role of a school psych?</p> <p>What experience in your training has been most impactful?</p> <p>What is something you’d be sure to include in your training plan?</p> <p>Celebrations Things I did well:</p> <p>I explained my theoretical orientation well.</p> <p>I used wonderful examples of past clients.</p> <p>Challenges Things I might do differently next time:</p> <p>Take more deep breaths before interview.</p> <p>Decrease rate of speech.</p> <p>Lessons Things I want to keep in mind for future interviews:</p> <p>May want to create cheat sheet of cases I can discuss.</p> <p>Have list of questions I want to ask supervisors prepared.</p> | |

CHOOSING AMONG INTERNSHIP OFFERS

Once the interview process has concluded, if you interviewed at multiple sites and have multiple offers to consider, it is time to evaluate your opportunities.

Beyond confirming that an internship will meet your program and credentialing requirements, you must also consider the extent to which the internship aligns with short- and long-term career goals as well as personal factors that may affect the successful completion of the internship.

Below is a nonexhaustive list of questions to ask when comparing internship offers:

- Does the internship meet the internship requirements of my program?
- Does it meet the requirements of the credential I want to pursue?
- Does it offer adequate, high-quality supervision?
- Does it offer diverse opportunities for me to practice my skills and develop new competencies?
- Are there unique areas of focus that will be available to me at this site?
- Will it allow me to make progress toward my short- and long-term goals?
- Does it offer professional development and networking opportunities?
- Do the site culture and climate seem to be a good fit for me?
- Does the organization espouse values with which I relate?
- Does it seem likely I would be able to maintain a healthy work–life balance on this internship?
- Do I want to live and work in this area?
- Will I be able to afford living on this compensation or additional income?

Use the worksheet below to compare internship offers using criteria that are specific and meaningful for you.

Example: Comparing Internship Offers

In the first column, list internship features or criteria that are important to you. In the remaining columns, compare sites according to each feature or criterion.

| Criterion | Site 1: _____ | Site 2: _____ | Site 3: _____ |
|---|--|---|--|
| Meets requirements of program and credential I want to pursue | Yes, school district has agreement with my program. However, some experiences may need to be created to meet requirements (such as counseling). | Possibly, school district has not worked with my program before, but eager to ensure all program requirements are met. | Yes. |
| Adequate supervision and appropriate expectations for an intern | Supervision by a primary supervisor, however some experiences may be facilitated by other school psychs on staff as opportunities arise. | Yes. Potential supervisor is very experienced and has a plan to ease interns into independent roles. Supervision is ongoing. | Primary supervisor available weekly, but internship includes substantial amount of independence early on (possible assignment to three schools as primary psychologist). |
| Offers diverse opportunities to hone and develop skills | Yes, pre-K–12, with all disabilities. Limited opportunities with educational evaluation components as diagnosticians complete achievement assessments. However, psychologists can choose to complete achievement testing to support findings of cognitive processing weakness. Psychs do not run meetings. District demographic data is diverse. | Some: Site is in the process of growth; adding positions to create programming for children with a variety of needs. Experiences working with all disabilities is available. Psychologists lead all eligibility/reeval meetings, consult during IEP meetings when needed, support special education teachers in intervention design. District is mostly affluent. | Site has programs across the continuum of services to allow experience with low incidence disabilities as well as behavior programming toward ASD and ED students. Opportunities for small group counseling are also available. District demographic data is somewhat diverse. Minorities make up less than 50%; data indicates 70% low SES. |
| Alignment with short- and long-term goals | Yes: District requires psychologists to meet quarterly and engaged in PLCs with emphasis on individual interests/areas of growth. Site also provides in house PD (with options to make requests). District is piloting an RTI model and opportunities for involvement with implementation of district programs is available. | Somewhat: Site would allow opportunities to become a leader within the school building, extensive experience with consultation, and wide range of assessment experience. Little to no opportunity for small group counseling/intervention experience. District has strong RTI model | Yes. Site provides multiple experiences regarding practice model. Will provide experiences to meet areas of interest and my growth areas. Psychologists on staff are beyond early career and experienced as supervisors and have specific interest areas to help aid in my growth. |
| Opportunities for professional development and networking | Provides ongoing professional development in house (experts brought in for entire staff). No funding for out of state conferences. | Utilizes state DOE sponsored free webinars, typically covers state conferences. Some funding available for out of state conferences and professional development. | Limited funding for any ongoing professional development. Encouraged to participate in no-cost online webinars. |

| Criterion | Site 1: _____ | Site 2: _____ | Site 3: _____ |
|--|---|---|--|
| Culture, climate, and organization values are a good fit for me | District mission statement and vision align with my views. Interview panel was inviting. Personally acquainted with employees of the district | District mission statement and vision align with my views, interview panel was cordial. No personal/professional contacts in district for further insight. | Unsure. Interview panel was difficult to read. |
| Ability to maintain work–life balance | Work–life balance appears to be easily maintained at this site. | Appears that work–life balance can be maintained and is celebrated among staff, but number of responsibilities are concerning in regards to work–life balance | Due to number of schools and level of independence required, work–life balance may be difficult to maintain. |
| Compensation/stipend Can I afford living expenses at this site? | No stipend or hourly wage. Financial means would need to be explored in order for this site to be considered. | Small stipend \$10,000; other income to supplement living will be needed. | Paid at an hourly rate; this would supplement current income and maintain current living arrangements. |

Succeeding in the School Psychology Internship

DEVELOPING THE INTERNSHIP PLAN

Step 1: Assess your strengths and areas of growth.

As you enter your internship, it is important to have clearly identified the set of competencies you aim to develop by the time the internship concludes. Consider professional development standards and competencies, such as those within NASP's (2020) Practice Model.

Consider using [NASP's Self-Assessment for School Psychologists](#) (Goode, n.d.) to pinpoint your areas of strength and growth. You may also reflect upon and reference records or products from previous coursework, fieldwork, research experiences, and service experiences to identify both successes and gaps in development. Once you have a better understanding of where you want your internship to take you in terms of professional growth, it's time for more concrete goal setting.

Step 2: Develop your internship goals.

In consultation with your internship supervisor, identify the concrete goals you would like to achieve across your internship year. As you develop these, consider the opportunities you are likely to access at your site and within your responsibilities; consider also, though, your longer-term goals in relation to your identified areas of strength and growth.

You're well-advised to make your internship goals SMART (i.e., specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound).

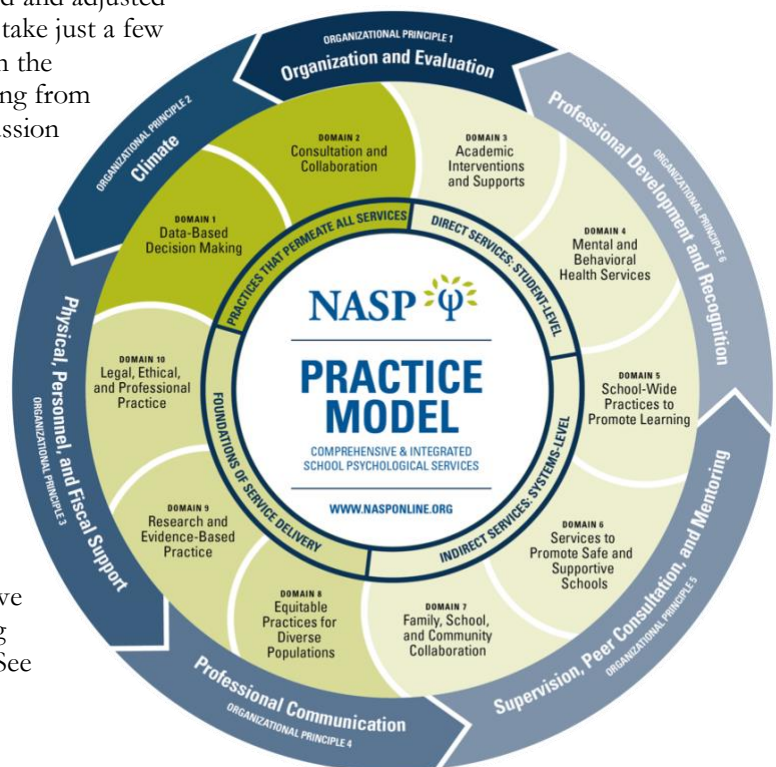
- You might set goals related to *what* you will do (e.g., lead three manifestation determination meetings with minimal or no supervisory support, submit your thesis to a journal for publication).
- You might also set goals related to *outcomes* of what you will do (e.g., develop confidence in independently leading manifestation determination meetings, get your thesis manuscript accepted at a scholarly journal).
- See Guiney (2019) for guidance in developing SMART internship goals as well as examples and nonexamples of SMART goals.

Keep in mind that your internship goals should be revisited and adjusted throughout your internship experience. Some goals might take just a few weeks to meet, and others might end up taking longer than the internship year. You might identify additional goals resulting from your new, on-the-job learning experiences. Prioritize discussion of your goals and progress within supervision meetings.

Step 3: Craft a plan of action that will support you in attaining those goals.

Once you have identified your goals, it is time to identify what you will need to do to accomplish those goals as well as develop an organization system to keep you on track. Do not let yourself get overwhelmed, though: Chunk out your actions and deadlines to identify small, attainable steps that you can take throughout the year.

You may find it helpful to prepare and use a comprehensive calendar, year-at-a-glance, or priority plan for your training year. These tools can be helpful yet flexible as roadmaps. See templates and examples on the pages that follow.



Example: Year-at-a-Glance Form

| Month | Special Events or Holidays | Graduate Program Requirements & Deadlines | Internship Site Requirements & Deadlines | Future Planning |
|-----------|---|--|---|---|
| August | <i>8/10: First day of school!</i> | <i>Practicum Paperwork due</i> | | |
| September | <i>Universal screener wave 1</i> | <i>Reflection Logs due</i> | | |
| October | <i>Fall Break</i> | <i>Reflection Logs due</i> <i>Collect evidence & artifacts for internship portfolio</i> | <i>End of Quarter 1 (10/25)</i> <i>IEP Counseling Goals Progress reports due</i> | <i>Begin exploring postinternship job opportunities</i> |
| November | <i>Thanksgiving</i> | <i>Reflection Logs due</i> <i>Proposal for year-long project</i> | | |
| December | <i>Winter Break</i> | <i>Collect evidence & artifacts for internship portfolio</i> | <i>End of Quarter 2 (12/18)</i> <i>IEP Counseling Goals Progress reports due</i> | |
| January | <i>Universal screener wave 2</i> | | | |
| February | | | | <i>Attend NASP convention</i> |
| March | <i>Spring Break</i> | | <i>End of Quarter 3 (3/10)</i> <i>IEP Counseling Goals Progress reports due</i> | |
| April | | <i>Collect evidence & artifacts for internship portfolio</i> | | |
| May | <i>Universal screener wave 3</i> <i>5/30: Last day of school</i> | <i>Present internship portfolio</i> | <i>End of Quarter 4 (5/28)</i> <i>IEP Counseling Goals Progress reports due</i> | <i>Submit NASP proposal (potentially based on internship experiences)</i> |
| June | | | | <i>Prepare NCSP application</i> |
| July | | | | |

Example: Three-Month Priority Plan

| Internship Goal Area | SMART Goal | Month 1: <u>August</u> | Month 2: <u>September</u> | Month 3: <u>October</u> |
|---|---|--|---|--|
| Act as change agent within internship placement. | By November 1, I will grow in my role on the MTSS team such that I am actively participating in all weekly meetings and leading data discussions during biweekly data reviews. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Read and annotate school, district, staff handbook.</i> • <i>Discover system (Whom to go to for what? Who are silent partners?).</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Ask supervisor about priorities of district and school.</i> ▪ <i>Begin attending MTSS meetings.</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Contribute to inservice training development.</i> • <i>Propose incorporating disproportionality analysis in MTSS meetings.</i> |
| Grow cultural humility as a school psychologist. | At the end of each week throughout the school year, I will (a) write in my journal about my learning and reflections and (b) self-evaluate and adjust my internship goals. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Conduct self-reflection.</i> • <i>Identify areas of growth.</i> • <i>Communicate safe space.</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Attend antiracism training.</i> • <i>Incorporate areas of growth into internship goals.</i> • <i>Advocate for students on my caseload.</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Self-reflect on intersectionality and areas of growth.</i> • <i>Incorporate areas of growth into internship goals.</i> • <i>Advocate for students on my caseload.</i> |
| Prepare for future success in the field of school psychology. | By April 30, I will submit completed applications to at least three school districts whose positions will allow me to continue my work in evaluation, consultation, and counseling. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Draft internship goals.</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Revisit and adjust internship goals.</i> • <i>Explore the many faces of school psychology.</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Revisit and adjust internship goals.</i> • <i>Begin exploring job postings and set up alerts for job openings based on interests and location.</i> |

CLARIFYING ROLES, RESPONSIBILITIES, AND EXPECTATIONS

Prior to your internship beginning, you must confirm that the specific internship requirements of your training program can be met across your internship year according to the information that is provided to you. Essential to a successful internship experience is alignment to NASP's Professional Standards (2020). Should you have any concerns about the alignment of your internship experience with program requirements or NASP's Professional Standards, proactively clarify any prospective issues with your supervisor to confirm that all parties have the necessary information and shared vision of what the internship experience will entail.

A critical first step in orienting to your position as an intern is to clarify with your internship supervisor(s) your roles, your responsibilities, and expectations within your setting, as well as how each might change over time (e.g., as you familiarize with policies and procedures and build more independence within your role). Note that this is not something you will be doing alone: Your university supervisor plays an important role in determining these arrangements through preinternship planning, internship site visits, and ongoing university supervision.

At the beginning of your internship experience, clarify with your supervisor what your role will look like in the immediate future and what it will not look like. Define specific responsibilities, workflows, chains of communication, and interaction norms to further assess how, more explicitly, you will fulfill that role. Assess your level of understanding and comfort with the expectations and norms that have been communicated to you and discuss any concerns or preferences with your supervisor in a respectful, solution-oriented fashion.

Ultimately, to be successful as an intern, you must have a fluid understanding of your role, shape your role (as much as needed), and be shaped by it.

Managing Your Role

An important facilitator of a successful internship experience is your organization and documentation system. Different placements provide various levels of guidance or requirements. Ensure your personal and shared documentation systems align with all minimum requirements of your internship site and university guidance, including adherence to confidentiality standards. You may choose to maintain documentation electronically, on paper, or using a combination of modalities.

One critical component of an organization system is a method that allows you to capture how you are spending your time in order to log internship hours and activities but also to reflect on your time management and inform your planning. Before you invest substantial time in building your own system, determine whether your graduate program or internship site has a specific program you must use; if not, explore whether your peers have existing systems that work for them or if an available web- or app-based tool might make your job even easier. Note that you may be required to submit your time logs for certification or licensure purposes in the future.

Time management is key to success as an intern. Proactively schedule your time, find a calendar/appointment management system that works for you, and determine how best to track your deadlines and priorities. Use tools to maximize your organization and productivity, including recording meeting notes, specifically identifying to-do items, and following through on any assigned action items. Follow up with appropriate stakeholders in a timely manner, using calendar reminders and to-do lists to help you stay on track. Sometimes supervisors have organizational systems that work well for them, which you can learn from and incorporate in your own work.

Even as a trainee on your internship year, you are required to follow ethical principles of practice and consult supervisors and colleagues for support with this responsibility. This entails adhering to school psychologists' responsibilities to schools, families, communities, the profession, and society (NASP, 2021a). Consider using supervision time to review ethical standards and discuss how different standards might apply to your roles and responsibilities.

Self-Advocating Within Your Role

Acting as an intern will allow you to continue developing and maintaining professional competencies and boundaries. A part of that work is advocating for your own needs and preferences while navigating your role. In some cases, self-advocacy might look like requesting a change to your responsibilities or your engagement in a new or different type of experience that would address a gap in your training. Self-advocacy might look like requesting additional supervision in a new area of practice for you or requesting an accommodation on a task you're having trouble with. Self-advocacy might also look like reminding a colleague or supervisor of your preferred pronouns or of the correct way to pronounce your name. Self-advocacy might even look like raising a concern for how you have been treated and requesting that a colleague or supervisor conduct themselves in a different way.

As a school psychologist in training, you are also a problem-solver in training. Self-advocacy in the workplace is all about seeking to solve a problem that is negatively affecting your performance, growth, or wellness. Advocate for your needs and preferences, and do so in a manner and with an audience conducive to your goal of solving the problem at hand. You don't need to go about this alone, though; identify whether you would benefit from consultation with your internship supervisor, your university supervisor, or peers within or beyond your setting in setting out a successful path to self-advocacy.

Adapting to Role Changes

It is important to realize that systems and roles within systems evolve. As such, changes may occur throughout your training year; this may include your duties, scope, and assignments as an intern. Expect to be more dependent on your supervisor early in the year and gradually develop more independence, recognizing that this shift to independence will likely vary across domains and responsibilities. There may also be seasons of specific foci or work that may vary according to organizational schedules and priorities. With this in mind, it is important to revisit these ideas and tools throughout your internship experience as your training year progresses. Proactively seek clarifications from your internship supervisor and, if necessary, seek support in adapting to new roles, responsibilities, and expectations.

NAVIGATING WORKPLACE POLICIES, PROCEDURES, AND CULTURES

Getting to Know the System

The first step as an intern is to determine the status quo, similar to conducting a needs assessment while evaluating a program or determining present levels of students during psychoeducational assessment. Within your internship, appraise the culture of each system (e.g., school building). Even if you are working, for example, with multiple schools within the same school district, there may be differences from building to building. This could include vocabulary used, school-wide expectations, routines, procedures, and even differences in “whom to go to for what.” Ensure you have the need-to-know information for any building in which you will work and that you have identified a designated go-to person in each building in case of crisis situations. It may be helpful to develop a cheat sheet of relevant site details and contacts (see example on p. 39) for yourself or to be shared across a team of colleagues. It will also be important for you to review or request access to other documents necessary to understanding your system (e.g., organizational charts, site directories, committee rosters, special education policy manuals).

Getting outside your office or workspace is critical. Consider ways you can get to know the people, norms, and overall culture of your setting. For example, at the start of the school year, you might introduce yourself to teachers while they are preparing their classrooms. Your supervisor might be willing to help facilitate this process. Consider asking to send an introductory email to staff or to introduce yourself at a staff meeting. Once school has started, you might volunteer for duties at arrival, dismissal, in the cafeteria, or at recess. You might spend time a good deal of time at the beginning of your experience observing and supporting in common areas and classrooms to get a better feel for the environment in which you are working.

Your assessment will need to go beyond what is on paper, though. You will learn a lot about your setting's social landscape by interacting with others. It is especially important to identify and align with others with shared interests and engaged in shared initiatives within your setting(s). As you do this, though, remember the importance of maintaining professional boundaries, especially on social media and in situations with conflicts of loyalties (NASP, 2020). When encountering difficult or nuanced situations during internship, use an ethical decision-making framework or consult with colleagues, your site supervisor, or your university supervisor to develop potential solutions and determine the appropriate course of action moving forward (Boccio, 2021).

Serving as a Social Justice Advocate

School psychologists, and in turn school psychology interns, are asked to be agents of change, leaning into social justice work. One aspect of doing that work is viewing your internship as an opportunity to apply skills related to social justice and deepen understanding of intersectionality in your work as an ally (Proctor, 2020). NASP offers a variety of [social justice resources](#) to help you grow in this area. It is important to recognize that social justice work will look different across settings. It is also important to recognize that your supervisor and site staff may be at different places in their social justice development than you—they may have advanced mind-sets and skill sets, or they may be able to learn more from you.

Social justice work could include operating within the organizational structure of your internship placement. If there are initiatives and diversity work already being done in your organization, volunteer and take time to participate in that work. In addition, actively seek out opportunities to act as an ally—whether in meetings, consultation with staff, conversations with families, assessing students, researching, and implementing evidence-based practices. Several practical strategies are using inclusive language (i.e., aligning with your placement's vocabulary if inclusive practices are in place, modeling inclusive language if it is not in place), seeking out appropriate cultural adaptations to evidence-based interventions, creating and communicating a safe space to staff and students, and empowering those with whom you work. Stay up to date on timely topics in the field of education and on NASP's guidance on those topics (e.g., guidance on navigating conversations about critical race theory; NASP, 2021b). Ultimately, internships provide a powerful chance to practice applying multicultural knowledge and skills within an organization in an effort to empower students and their families.

Working as an advocate while maintaining a professional manner is a hard-won skill. Responding to a comment from a staff member, family member, student, or supervisor in a professional tone and manner can prove difficult in the moment. When an uncomfortable and possibly even frustrating situation arises, take a deep breath, seek understanding through questioning, address situations honestly, and perhaps revisit the situation with individuals or parties at a later time. As a professional, it is necessary to determine boundaries as well as respect those of your supervisor and stakeholders. To prepare yourself for possible reluctance or resistance, assess the change readiness of your placement while also remembering the illusion of linear change (Sabnis & Proctor, 2021) and committing to serve as the social justice advocate you have trained to be.

Example: Internship Site Cheat Sheet

| | School A | School B | School C | School D |
|------------------------------------|--|--|--|--|
| Principal | John Doe | Sarah Davis | Olivia Webster | Andre Wise |
| Assistant Principal(s) | Raquel Brown | Rodney Jones | Susan Peters Alex Smith | Tracy Lee |
| Front Office Staff | Lara Whitman | Maria Carroll | Jane Chang | Anna Vasquez |
| Behavior Coordinator | Angela Johnson | Peter Mason | Jeff Holton | May Andersen |
| SPED Teachers | Dave Hoyle | Sam Garcia | Beth Waterson | Carla Ruiz |
| PBIS Expectations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Practice Positivity Act Responsibly Work and Play Safely Show Respect | PRIDE: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepared Respectful Include Others Be Dedicated Be Engaged | ROAR: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Respect Others On Task Always Safe Remember Self-Control | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be Safe Be Respectful Be Ready |
| Phone Number | 123-456-7890 | 345-678-9012 | 789-123-4567 | 123-458-9076 |
| Fax | 123-456-7888 | 345-678-9026 | 789-123-7898 | 123-458-9090 |
| Address | 1234 Main St. City, State 98765 | 4567 Ridge Rd. City, State 98765 | 8908 Hanley St. City, State 98778 | 1004 Avenue U City, State 98765 |
| Link | School website | School website | School website | School website |
| District Staff | | | | |
| SPED Secretary | Jim Ellis, first.lastname@awesomeinternsite.org , 123-456-9085 | | | |
| SPED Director | Dr. Martha Green, first.lastname@awesomeinternsite.org , 123-456-9090 Best time to call: Mondays & Wednesdays, 1:00–4:00 p.m. | | | |
| School Psychologist(s) | Cameron Gray, first.lastname@awesomeinternsite.org Dr. Michael Harris, first.lastname@awesomeinternsite.org | | | |
| Other Related Services Provider(s) | SLP: Andy Watson 234-567-8901 OT: Hannah Bell 234-567-8902 PT: Veronica Cruz 234-567-8903 APE: Liz Morrison 234-567-8904 HH/HI/Deaf Teacher: Stephanie Parker 234-567-8905 VI Teacher: Lucy Clarke 234-567-8906 AT Coordinator: Sara Shahid 234-567-8907 | | | |
| General Information | | | | |
| Student Information System | Link to SIS Reminders for accessing data: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make sure you are on correct campus! Family contact information under XX tab | | | |
| SPED System | Link to SPED System Reminders: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teacher bundles (helpful for gen ed staff) under XX tab Drafts to be locked 24 hours after meetings (504, IEP, etc.) | | | |
| Common Assessments | Cog: WISC, UNIT Achieve: WIAT, KTEA SEB: BASC, Conners Early Childhood: WPPSI | | | |

| | |
|------------------------|---|
| Core Curricula | <p>Link to PK curricula</p> <p>Link to K–2nd grade curricula</p> <p>Link to 3rd–5th grade curricula</p> <p>Link to 6th–8th grade curricula</p> <p>Link to 9th–12th grade curricula</p> <p>Link to 18+ curricula</p> <p>Link to modified curricula</p> |
| Supplemental Curricula | <p>SEL</p> <p>Reading interventions</p> <p>Mathematics interventions</p> <p>General academic interventions</p> <p>Behavioral interventions</p> |
| Screening Dates | <p>September 15, 2022</p> <p>January 20, 2023</p> <p>May 12, 2023</p> |
| Benchmark Dates | <p>October 5–7, 2022</p> <p>December 15–19, 2022</p> <p>March 29–31, 2023</p> <p>May 24–26, 2023</p> |
| Other Notes | |

ENGAGING IN EFFECTIVE SUPERVISEE BEHAVIORS

The internship year is often the final year of training for school psychologists. For many, it is the last year in which school psychologists receive formal supervision.

Supervision can provide an important, supportive, guided context for professional learning and growth. As the saying goes, though, supervision is what you make of it.

Although supervisor behaviors are critical to interns' learning and growth, interns—supervisees themselves—have important responsibilities within the supervision relationship. Interns can maximize their learning and growth within supervision by engaging in effective supervisee behaviors.

Supervisees can identify their responsibilities in the supervision relationship by remembering to be A LEARNER (Guiney, 2019):

- **Active.** To be active, supervisees ask how to become involved rather than waiting to be given things to do. They look for new experiences and share their ideas and suggestions.
- **Listening.** Supervisees listen and observe how the supervisor conducts job responsibilities. They are active listeners and are open and receptive to supervisor feedback.
- **Ethical.** To act ethically, supervisees learn and refer to the NASP and APA ethics codes. They are also transparent with the supervisor about all their cases and responsibilities, especially when mistakes occur.
- **Accountable.** Supervisees develop effective organizational systems and complete tasks with adherence to deadlines. They also anticipate scheduling conflicts and plan ahead.
- **Ready.** Supervisees are well prepared. They complete training requirements and prepare for supervision by coming to a supervision session with questions, notes, and data. Supervisees are also self-aware of their own strengths and weaknesses.
- **Networking.** Supervisees look for opportunities to collaborate with a range of education and mental health professionals and participate in regional, state, and national school psychology associations.
- **Engaged.** Supervisees are on-task during their practicum experiences, limiting personal communications during the school day.
- **Reflective.** Supervisees understand that mistakes are opportunities for growth, think about what went well and what needs to be done differently, and reflect on ecological and cultural considerations.

Interns can strategize how to be A LEARNER within supervision using the planning form on the page that follows.

Example: Supervisee Responsibilities

Be A LEARNER!

| Supervisee Responsibility | How I Will Fulfill This Responsibility |
|---------------------------|---|
| <u>A</u> ctive | <i>I will observe or participate in at least one new experience a week.</i> |
| <u>L</u> istening | <i>When I receive feedback, I will be a good listener. If I find that I am focusing more on talking than listening, I will count to three before I respond in any conversation.</i> |
| <u>E</u> thical | <i>Even though it will be tempting to primarily talk about the things that are going well, I will commit to talk about my growth areas too. I will do my part to create a safe space during supervision sessions so that I will feel less unsure or awkward about sharing my struggles.</i> |
| <u>A</u> ccountable | <i>I will set aside time once a month to talk about my time management strategies with my supervisor. This may include learning about her time management strategies, talking about what is not working for me, or making a plan I want to implement.</i> |
| <u>R</u> eady | <i>I will prepare a list of questions to discuss with my supervisor when we meet.</i> |
| <u>N</u> etworking | <i>I will meet one new person a week or send some type of follow-up communication to someone I recently met. This can include asking someone a question, sending a thank you note, or checking to see how someone is doing.</i> |
| <u>E</u> ngageds | <i>I will not have my phone screen in sight during meetings or conversations with others. I will only check personal email during lunch. I will be cognizant of how frequently I text for non-work-related issues.</i> |
| <u>R</u> eflective | <i>I will set aside 5–10 minutes Sunday night or Monday morning to reflect on the week ahead. This may include thinking about what I want to accomplish this week, what I need to do differently, or what I need to do exactly the same. I will set aside 5–10 minutes at the end of the day, possibly on the ride home, to think about how each day went. I will set aside 5–10 minutes Friday afternoon to think about the week overall. I will discuss pertinent reflections with my supervisor each week.</i> |

PREPARING FOR CREDENTIALING REQUIREMENTS

Your credential is the official recognition of professional status. It is evidence you are qualified to be a school psychologist, allows you to use an official title, and authorizes you to provide services within your bounds of competency.

The credentialing of school psychologists happens at the state level. The word *credential* is a broad term that indicates you have met criteria to be a professional. There are different types of credentials; two types of credentials are *certification* and *licensure*. Although there are exceptions, the term certification is most often used by state education agencies, whereas the term licensure is used by boards of psychology.

Your internship experiences should align with the requirements of the credential(s) you wish to pursue. An initial step for becoming credentialed is to list the credentials you want to earn. For example, you may want to pursue your NCSP even though you are not in a NASP-approved graduation preparation program. You may want to pursue licensure even though you do not plan on pursuing an APA-accredited doctoral-level internship. You may also want to work in a state other than where you attended graduate school. All these opportunities would require you to make sure that your internship experiences satisfy credentialing requirements.

After preparing a list of credentials you want to pursue, create a list of the requirements expected by each credentialing agency. This may include accruing a minimum number of internship hours, including a specific number of direct service and supervision hours, taking specific competency exams, earning a specific degree (e.g., EdS or MA in School Psychology), or taking a required number of course hours or mandated training sessions (e.g., child abuse identification). After creating your list, determine which requirements you need to integrate into your internship experience and which requirements stand alone. For example, studying for a competency exam is not something you would need to do as a component of an internship, but it is something you may need to do to meet credentialing requirements. Next, for the items you identified that need to be satisfied through internship, determine how you will satisfy the requirements and what evidence you need to provide documentation that you met the requirement. Throughout the school year, revisit your list to make sure you are working towards satisfying these requirements and collecting the necessary evidence to demonstrate competency in or completion of the areas.

Remember, also, to ask questions. Ask your school psychology faculty for help, identify the individuals at your university who work with credentialing agencies, reach out to local and state school psychology associations, or talk to school psychologists who have recently been through the credentialing process.

You may also want to reference the following NASP resources:

- NASP's [School Psychology Credentialing Resources](#) webpage provides links to credentialing requirements for each state and territory.
- A [Question and Answer Panel on Certification and Licensure in School Psychology](#) hosted by NASP's National and State Credentialing Committee.
- Rossen, E. (2014). Best practices in national certification and credentialing in school psychology. In P. L. Harrison & A. Thomas (Eds.), *Best practices in school psychology: Foundations* (pp. 541–552). National Association of School Psychologists.

EXPLORING POSTINTERNSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Throughout your internship year, continually reflect on where you want to go upon the completion of your internship.

- Are you enjoying the work you're currently doing on internship and looking for a permanent position in a similar role?
- Are you looking to step into a different type of role or in a different type of setting? If so, [this fact sheet](#) (Lyksett et al., 2020) might be of interest to you!
- Are you seeking additional graduate or continuing education?
- Are you a doctoral student interested in a postdoctoral fellowship or residency?

As you consider potential next steps and trajectories, bounce ideas off your peers, colleagues, and supervisors to learn more about prospective opportunities and leads. Use your network and grow your network; attend regional, state, and national conferences with an intentional goal of networking and exploring postinternship opportunities. Start to build some ideas about what your next year, or two, or three might hold, and—if you'd like—use the planning template on page 48 to document and track your plans.

Practical Considerations for Transitioning Into Early Career

Job application timelines for postinternship opportunities vary substantially both within and between job categories:

- If you're applying for school-based positions, you're likely to see many jobs for the subsequent school year posted in the second half of your internship school year.
- If you're applying for academic positions at universities, you might see job openings posted as early as the summer months for start dates in the subsequent summer or fall.
- If you're applying for postdoctoral fellowships and residencies, you're likely to see openings posted later in the fall and winter, with many applications due in December and January.

If you took out loans to pay for a portion of your graduate program, look into what your responsibilities and options will be upon graduation. You might even choose to apply for service loan forgiveness ([one of NASP's advocacy initiatives](#)).

As you become credentialed and begin your career, keep those credentialing and recredentialing requirements in check. Learn more about the types of continuing education opportunities that meet requirements of various credentialing bodies. For example, school psychologists who hold the NCSP credential must complete 75 hours of professional development during each 3-year renewal cycle, including content related to specific considerations like ethics and legal issues or equity, diversity, and inclusion. Notably, candidates must also provide documentation of participating in at least 1 year of postgraduate professional support (i.e., mentorship) during the first renewal cycle. Consider creating a documentation system and setting calendar reminders to prompt you to submit your recredentialing materials ahead of deadlines.

Getting Your Career Started Off Right

As you embark on your postinternship experience, in the same way you did at the start of internship, begin with the end in mind. In light of burnout statistics and shortages among school psychologists, develop antecedent strategies to minimize burnout (NASP, n.d.). Some practical strategies to prevent burnout include:

- Establish and maintain healthy self-care habits and routines that work for you.
- Set your hours and stick to them. Give yourself grace if these are not adhered to.
- Reach out to supervisors and colleagues for consultation. Build a community of professionals to problem solve with.
- Participate in the school community. Find those individuals with shared professional values and passions, and build allyships.
- Harness social media for good. Follow school psychologists and other related professionals who are focused on sustainability and student-focused work.

Example: Three Year at a Glance Sheet

Year 1 Placement: Intern Site A

| Mon/Yr. | Goal(s) | Goal Objective(s) | |
|------------|---------------------------------------|---|---|
| 2022–2023 | | Increase Competency as Comprehensive School Psychologist | Multidisciplinary Teaming |
| Aug. 2022 | Onboarding for internship | Self-assessment using NASP tool to establish baseline of competencies. | Identify stakeholders and systems within internship. |
| Sept. 2022 | | Draft professional goals based on self-assessment. | Ensure initial collaboration has occurred for every campus for coordinators and key professionals at all tiers. |
| Oct. 2022 | | Conduct time audit of work time and advocate for adjustments based on drafted goals. | |
| Nov. 2022 | Reflect and advocate responsibilities | Review systems and structures within placement to determine opportunities for improvements to support learners. | Facilitate proactive collaboration for student programming meetings (504, IEP, child study team). |
| Dec. 2022 | | | Encourage collaboration for system-wide programming meetings (Tier 1, SWPBIS). |
| Jan. 2023 | | | |
| Feb. 2023 | Plan for next school year | Seek out opportunities to enhance and increase time dedicated to domains of NASP Practice Model that may not be current priority. | Seek out opportunities to increase meaningful collaboration across disciplines. |
| Mar. 2023 | | | |
| Apr. 2023 | | | |
| May 2023 | Finish strong | Support learners and staff through end-of-year standardized testing (plan for increased counseling and crisis support). | Wrap up all case conceptualization, progress monitoring, assessments to ensure transition planning. |
| Jun. 2023 | | Redo self-assessment using NASP tool to establish current proficiency of competencies. | |
| Jul. 2023 | | Update professional plan. | Sign contract for following school year. |

Year 2 Placement: Full-Time Job With Site A

| Mon/Yr. | Goal(s) | Goal Objective(s) | |
|------------|--|---|---|
| | | Comprehensive School Psychologist | Sustainable Professional |
| 2023–2024 | | | |
| Aug. 2023 | Start strong | Highlight and training on behavioral screening and data analysis from academic universal screener. Ensure certification application is submitted. | Set professional goals with supervisor and seek out mentoring from those with other areas of competency. |
| Sept. 2023 | | | |
| Oct. 2023 | Embrace being life-long learner | Translate research into actionable next steps about behavior interventions in schools for class-wide systems. | Build collaboration opportunities and update time management approach to balance my time. |
| Nov. 2023 | | Translate research into actionable next steps about behavior interventions for social skills for groups of learners. | Begin lunch and learn about research you are digesting and translating. |
| Dec. 2023 | | Translate research into actionable next steps about cultural adaptations of behavior interventions. | Participate in self-care events with local community of school psychologists. |
| Jan. 2024 | Make connections and ground growth in evidence-based practices | Translate research into actionable next steps about intensive behavior interventions for individual learners. | Build professional learning community in local community (or online). |
| Feb. 2024 | | Translate research into actionable next steps about academic interventions in schools for class-wide systems. | Attend national conference and follow-up with connections made. |
| Mar. 2024 | | Translate research into actionable next steps about academic interventions for groups of learners. | Celebrate growth of learners and those in professional learning community. |
| Apr. 2024 | Share brilliance and gratitude | Actionable next steps from research about cultural adaptations of academic interventions. | Continue lunch and learns focused on academic interventions. |
| May 2024 | | Translate research into actionable next steps about intensive academic interventions for individual learners. | Wrap up and prepare all materials for transition to ensure continuity of services and supports. |
| Jun. 2024 | Transition well | Reflect on learning and update self-assessment of NASP Practice Model. | Find time to reflect and celebrate growth, acknowledge gratitude for those who have contributed to your growth. |
| Jul. 2024 | | Build professional development plan based on needs identified. | Hold space for individuals as you transition to new role. |

Year 3 Placement: Full-Time Job With Site A

| Mon/Yr. | Goal(s) | Goal Objective(s) | |
|------------|--|--|--|
| | | Comprehensive School Psychologist | Increase Cultural Humility |
| 2024–2025 | | | |
| Aug. 2024 | Sea legs for new FT job | Identify stakeholders and systems within internship, especially those collaborators with consulting. | Identify demographics and needs assessment for cultural adaptations of those learners, families, and teaching staff. |
| Sept. 2024 | | Begin consulting with teaching staff about academic interventions. | |
| Oct. 2024 | | Begin consulting with teaching staff about academic interventions. | Research and identify actionable next steps of cultural adaptations for academic interventions specific to population. |
| Nov. 2024 | Expand professional learning community and encourage others. | | |
| Dec. 2024 | Build skills related to fit and mentorship | Seek opportunities for mentorship. | |
| Jan. 2025 | | Seek opportunities to facilitate trainings. | |
| Feb. 2025 | Expand supervision understanding and celebrate growth | Share out celebrations of progress of consultees. | Attend trauma-informed interventions professional development. |
| Mar. 2025 | | Shadow supervisors and begin to develop skills related to supervision. | Train and begin practicing trauma-focused CBT, reflect on progress and adjust based on feedback. |
| Apr. 2025 | | | |
| May 2025 | Embrace feedback and looking ahead | Seek out feedback from consultees, mentees, and those from trainings. | Wrap up all case conceptualization, progress monitoring, assessments to ensure transition planning. |
| Jun. 2025 | | Professional development plan for the next 3 years. | Find opportunities to plan for cultural adaptations, trauma-informed care and assessment. |
| Jul. 2025 | | | |

Internship Pathways for Doctoral Students

TYPES OF DOCTORAL INTERNSHIPS

Doctoral students have diverse opportunities for completing the school psychology internship experience. These opportunities include pursuing internships that are accredited by the American Psychological Association (APA) or that participate in the Association of Psychology Postdoctoral and Internship Centers (APPIC). Internships may be APA-accredited, APPIC-participating, both, or neither (table below).

| | APA Accreditation | |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------|
| APPIC Membership | Non-APA-Accredited | APA-Accredited |
| | Not an APPIC Member | Not an APPIC Member |
| | Non-APA-Accredited | APA-Accredited |
| | APPIC Member | APPIC Member |

What Is APA Accreditation?

One consideration for doctoral students is whether to seek APA-accredited or non-APA-accredited internship opportunities. Internship sites apply for and receive APA accreditation by meeting prescribed guidelines and following specific policies. The table below summarizes various site requirements and characteristics across APA-accredited and non-APA-accredited internships.

| | Non-APA-Accredited Internship Site | APA-Accredited Internship Site |
|-----------------------------------|---|---------------------------------------|
| Required Hours^a | Varies | ≥ 1,500 hours |
| Supervision^b | Psychologist with the appropriate credential to work in the setting | Licensed psychologist |
| Site Placement^c | School setting | School and nonschool settings |
| Paid/Nonpaid | Paid and nonpaid placements | Paid placements |

^a NASP and CDSPP require 1,500 doctoral internship hours. ^b Supervision from a licensed psychologist (i.e., credentialed for independent practice outside of schools) may be required for eligibility to become licensed as a psychologist. ^c A minimum of 600 hours must be completed in a school-based setting to meet eligibility requirements for the NCSP credential.

The choice to pursue an APA-accredited or non-APA-accredited internship may be based on several factors, such as:

- The availability of internship slots (i.e., APA-accredited internships tend to be in higher demand than non-APA-accredited internships),
- The availability of internship slots in one’s desired realm of practice (e.g., APPIC includes fewer school-based internships relative to clinic- or hospital-based internships),
- Graduate program expectations or requirements (e.g., some programs strongly encourage or even require students to pursue an APA-accredited internship),
- State and provincial licensing requirements (e.g., some jurisdictions may require candidates to submit additional information and documentation to demonstrate their non-APA-accredited internship met APA training standards), and
- Career aspirations (e.g., some types of employers, like universities, prefer candidates who have completed APA-accredited internships).

In summary, some graduate students are attracted to APA-accredited internships because (a) they are required to meet stringent training and supervision standards, many of which all but ensure trainees will be able to meet credentialing standards in their region and (b) they may provide an advantage in applying to certain types of positions (e.g., in clinical or academic settings).

What Is APPIC?

Several organizations provide guidelines for doctoral internships in school psychology, including NASP, APA, and the Council of Directors of School Psychology Programs (CDSPP). Independently, these organizations all work to ensure that students receive high-quality internship training.

APPIC is an organization with a slightly different focus. The APPIC Internship Matching Program places students into psychology internship positions at training sites throughout the United States and Canada. APPIC was founded in 1968 to bring order to the internship selection process by publishing a directory of programs and advancing fair and equitable intern selection procedures. Along with National Matching Services Incorporated, an independent company that matches interns to sites, APPIC aims to maximize the number of interns who receive desirable internships as well as the number of internship programs that receive highly ranked interns.

APPIC-participating internships typically align with state psychology board requirements for licensure as a psychologist. States differ in their individual requirements for internship. Be sure to check with your individual state's licensing board to determine the requirements that you must meet in your internship for licensure. In general, most states require a year-long, full-time internship of at least 1,500 hours supervised by a licensed psychologist. Some states have additional requirements for the number of hours that must be spent in direct service, professional development, and supervision. View a list of state requirements for credentialing school psychologists through your state psychology or education board.

There are, however, a limited number of APPIC-participating internships that are based in schools. Doctoral school psychology students must seek training opportunities with at least a portion in school or educational settings to gain entry-level proficiency in school psychology in alignment with NASP's school-based internship requirement (i.e., at least 600 hours must be completed in an educational placement). Doctoral students who meet this requirement through completing a specialist-level internship (or equivalent experience) may complete some or all their internship hours in a nonschool setting if it is approved by their graduate program (NASP, 2010). This flexibility allows for diversity in internship training experiences as long as a potential internship site or placement is consistent with the doctoral program's requirements, values, and goals, which vary across institutions.

APPIC has been calculating and publicizing the number of internship sites to which successful candidates apply since 1999. In nearly every year, the data suggested that submitting between 11 and 15 applications was ideal for most applicants. Submitting more than 15 did not increase the chances of being matched, while submitting fewer than 11 reduced the chances of being matched.

Information about current or future internship opportunities is available through the APPIC online internship directory. This directory offers an easy way for prospective interns to identify internship opportunities. It also includes important statistics on individual internship programs (e.g., the number of applications submitted to each site each year, expected number of internship slots available, types of programs from which interns come). Information like this provided through the online internship database may be helpful in evaluating your interest in and fit with available internship opportunities (including role breakdown, description of typical responsibilities, along with demographics of clients and existing staff). The APPIC directory also includes postdoctoral fellowship listings, so ensure you are reviewing appropriate placements (and looking ahead if interested).

Making Your Choice

The decision of whether to pursue an APA-accredited or APPIC internship must be made on an individual basis in light of your professional goals and circumstances. In addition to exploring your goals, it is important to consult regularly with supervisors, colleagues, friends, and family to gain a balanced perspective on the type of internship experience that will likely maximize your professional growth and wellness during the internship year and beyond.

Related Resources

Collins, T., & Hawkins, R. (2020). Navigating the APPIC match. In D. S. Newman (Ed.), *The school psychology internship: A guide for interns and supervisors*. Routledge.

Williams-Nickelson, C., Prinstein, M. J., & Keilin, W. G. (2019). *Internships in psychology: The APAGS workbook for writing successful applications and finding the right fit* (4th ed.). American Psychological Association.

THE APPIC INTERNSHIP APPLICATION PROCESS

Applying for internships requires time, commitment, and patience. Considering the importance of adhering to specific objectives and due dates, applicants should begin exploring potential internship sites about a year before application deadlines to allow sufficient time to generate and refine application materials. To help with the latter, specific suggestions are provided below to help students navigate this process. For more guidelines, refer to the APAGS Internship Workbook (Williams-Nickelson et al., 2019).

Recording Practicum Hours Accurately

Use a time-tracking system that aligns with APPIC activity categories. Some graduate programs require the use of a specific system or database. One popular option is Time2Track. If your program does not use Time2Track, it might be helpful for you to review this program to see what type of information is logged and how in this system. School-based experiences are generally not well captured by Time2Track categories. Be creative but accurate in your recording of hours. For example, sharing assessment results with parents may be categorized under client consultation rather than support hours.

The Essay Component

All applicants to APPIC internships must submit four essays:

- A brief personal statement,
- An essay discussing how one's theoretical orientation influences their case conceptualization and service delivery,
- An essay discussing one's experience working with diverse populations and how multicultural issues influence one's practice, and
- An essay describing one's research interests and experiences.

Each internship essay must be under 500 words. Therefore, you must articulate how your previous training and experiences will likely contribute to your successes as interns concisely, which is not always an easy task. Although brief, these essays often form a strong impression on training directors and should not be taken lightly. Consider asking faculty members, practicum supervisors, or knowledgeable peers to review and comment on your essays prior to their submission. Take advantage of the writing center at your institution to assist with clarity and grammar in your writing.

The Cover Letter

The APPIC application also includes your submission of a cover letter to each internship site to which you are applying. Tips for preparing this document are included below:

- Start by considering your story. You have one or two pages to introduce yourself, emphasize the main takeaways your sites should know about you, and leave an impression. What impression are you looking to make?
- If you are applying to varied types of sites (e.g., school and clinical settings), create templates that you can tailor to the unique characteristics and circumstances of each site.
- Review each site's internship manual to determine elements to highlight in the cover letter. Capture and be sure to highlight your alignment with any frameworks or theoretical foundations included in the manual within cover letter.
- Identify three to four training goals for each site and briefly explain how you envision that site as enabling you to accomplish those training goals. Be sure to include any specific language or values reflected in the site's goals.

- It may be tempting to create a generic cover letter to reuse across sites, but resist the urge: Site supervisors may pick up on your genericness and interpret it as a lack of effort or interest.

The Curriculum Vitae

The APPIC application also includes your submission of your CV. Do the following as you prepare and finalize your CV:

- Be consistent in formatting and proofread for typos. Visit the writing center on campus for feedback and support.
- Provide brief descriptions of practicum experiences. Review your practicum syllabi to remind yourself of all the duties and responsibilities you fulfilled.
- Include any other relevant clinical or employment experiences. For example, you can include a section on graduate assistantships and related responsibilities.
- Review examples of colleagues' (or those with similar career paths you are pursuing) CVs to consider other elements you want to include.
- Periodically revisit and update your CV to maintain and capture all activities that may highlight your experiences, skills, and knowledge.
- Request feedback from advisors, supervisors, or peers in refining your CV.

The Standardized Reference Form

Rather than requesting letters of recommendation, APPIC requires you to identify advisors, supervisors, and professors who will submit information on you via a Standardized Reference Form. You will add your recommenders' information in the APPIC application portal, and your recommenders will be invited to complete a form that requests information in specific areas. You can support by your recommenders in completing the Standardized Reference Form by assembling a package of informational materials, which may include:

- The list of internship sites to which you are applying (including short rationale for site selection)
- Representative cover letters (one or several)
- Your internship essays
- Your up-to-date CV
- A summary of any other relevant training experiences, professional benchmarks, or background information not included in the prior materials
- A list of any areas of strength and opportunities for growth you would like the reference to highlight

Suggested Timeline

The table below displays a list of specific duties to be completed in applying to internship programs alongside an example timeline of completion. Specific deadline dates are published on APPIC website in early August of each application year.

| Month | Tasks |
|-------|--|
| June | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begin drafting your application essays. • Review internship program descriptions in the APPIC directory and create a list with information about sites in which you're interested. • Subscribe to APPIC email lists. |
| July | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revise your application essays and request feedback on them. • Continue revising internship program descriptions and revising your site list. |

| Month | Tasks |
|------------------|---|
| August | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finalize your application essays and site list. After summer grades have been posted, submit transcript requests. Identify your reference writers and ask if they are able and willing to provide a strong recommendation using the Standardized Reference Form (available through the AAPI). Once the AAPI Online Application portal opens, begin inputting your information. |
| September | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide your reference writers and director of clinical training with your CV and other information that may be helpful. Complete the AAPI Online Application. Develop your cover letter template, seek feedback on it, and use this feedback to finalize it. |
| October | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Using the template you've developed, tailor your cover letter for each site. Attach all application materials to your AAPI and have it approved by your director of clinical training. Submit your applications. Register for the Matching Program. |
| November | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Send thank-you notes to your reference writers. Create a spreadsheet of possible interview dates. Use this information to identify overlapping dates and prepare to schedule interviews. |
| December | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review your application materials and internship programs' materials to prepare for interviews. Conduct mock interviews with supervisors, advisees, peers, friends, and family members. Request constructive feedback you can use to shape your approach. |
| January | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attend your interviews. Schedule time to reflect. Consider sending thank-you notes to internship training directors. Plan your rankings. Review how the match algorithm works. Discuss options with your advisor, supervisor, and family as indicated. |
| February | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Submit your rank-order list. On match day, if you've matched, celebrate! If you haven't matched, speak with your director of clinical training to decide whether you should participate in Phase II. |

Begin with a timeline, start the application process early, and complete tasks each week. Do not wait until the last minute! It can also be helpful to join the official APPIC email lists and regularly check for updates to internship programs such as new estimates on the number of expected positions/tracks for various programs.

Most internship sites have application deadlines in November or December and extend interview offers a few weeks following the application deadline. Prepare to field multiple offers. Do not apply to any internship you are not willing to accept. Be gracious in responses and truthful in having multiple offers. Inquire into deadlines or other considerations for each offer to ensure transparency and compliance with the site's expectations.

The interview process will inevitably be filled with highs and lows. Some interviews will go well, and others may seem forced, uncomfortable, and tedious. However, regardless of your impression of an interview, getting there is the first step. Every year, several applicants fail to attend interviews because of inclement weather, delayed flights, poor planning, and even interview burnout. Therefore, although interviewees often schedule interviews back-to-back to save time and money, it is important to consider how unexpected events (e.g., airport delays, lost baggage, family crisis) can complicate travel plans and contribute to missed interviews. Furthering this point, allowing sufficient time between each interview also can help with mentally unwinding, reflecting, and overcoming illness.

APPIC Match Day

On match day, which occurs each year in February, prospective interns learn whether they matched to a site or need to explore other internship possibilities. Match results are emailed to prospective interns and then released on the National Matching Services website.

Those who do not initially match may identify viable sites in the Phase II match process. Similar to the traditional match process, Phase II involves submitting applications to internship programs, participating in interviews, ranking internship programs, and receiving match results on a second match day; however, the process is expedited. Phase II lasts approximately a month and is designed to fill vacant positions that remain from the initial match.

Related Resources

- Collins, T., & Hawkins, R. (2020). Navigating the APPIC match. In D. S. Newman (Ed.), *The school psychology internship: A guide for interns and supervisors*. Routledge.
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