

**Clinical Psychology Graduate Program  
The University of Western Ontario  
London, Ontario, Canada**

**POLICIES AND PROCEDURE FOR APPLYING TO  
PRE-DOCTORAL RESIDENCIES**

Most of the policies and procedures described in this document have been standard practices of the Clinical Psychology Program for a considerable period of time. As has always been the case, ultimate responsibility for obtaining and successfully completing the required full-year, full-time accredited residency rests entirely with the student. As applicants navigate through the residency process, the Clinical Program provides considerable guidance and assistance, in order to help maximize the chances of a successful match via APPIC.

**1) Spring and Summer prior to the Residency Application Year (starts in Sept.)**

Students should have initial discussions with their thesis supervisor, the Director of Clinical Training (DCT) and the Clinical Practica Coordinator (CPC) very early in the spring to determine whether it would be appropriate to apply for residencies that fall. Students should also read the “Determining Readiness to Apply for an Residency” document on our Clinical Program website, for further information and instructions. This document specifies the details of both thesis progress and clinical readiness that are required in order to apply for residency. For each student considering applying to residency, these requirements are formally reviewed by the Clinical Training Committee early in the summer.

As part of the review process, the DCT may consult with the student’s thesis supervisor, advisory committee, and any other relevant faculty, to determine whether the student is sufficiently advanced on thesis research to apply for residency. At an absolute minimum, students should have all dissertation data collected before leaving for residency. However, the Clinical Program *strongly recommends* that students submit a draft of the entire thesis (and ideally defend their dissertation) prior to the start of residency. The CPC may consult with the student’s clinical supervisors, core clinical faculty, and any other relevant parties, to determine whether the student, from a clinical skills standpoint, will be ready for residency by the time it would begin.

The Clinical Training Committee will meet in early summer of each year (typically in late June) to review the thesis progress and clinical readiness of those students indicating they would like to apply for residency that fall. Based upon the outcome of this meeting, the DCT will then provide a letter of initial approval for those students deemed “ready to apply for residency”. The Clinical Program review process and approval letter are both required in order to apply for residency. As described below, there will be three further “checkpoints” along the way, regarding thesis progress.

- a) Early in September, each student applying for residency should arrange to have a 20-30 minute meeting with the DCT to provide:
  - a. a detailed update of thesis progress, and
  - b. an initial list of CPA/APA accredited residency sites they are considering applying to.

This meeting will also review the application process and various other tasks and deadlines associated with residency applications.

- b) By October 1<sup>st</sup>, your thesis supervisor should send a brief email to the DCT indicating that you are “on track” with respect to meeting the thesis progress timetable you submitted to the program in June. If this is the case, you will then receive a brief email from the program director indicating that you can now proceed with the next phase of the application process (i.e., sending out your applications). If not, the program director will then consult with your supervisor, your thesis committee, and other core clinical faculty to determine whether or not it would be appropriate for you to proceed further with the application process.

- c) By January 10<sup>th</sup>, your thesis supervisor should send a second email to the DCT indicating that you are “on track” with respect to the thesis progress timetable you submitted to the program in June. If this is the case, you will then receive a brief email from the program director indicating you can now proceed with the remaining steps of the application process (i.e., submitting your rank ordered list of residency settings to the APPIC match, participating in the match, and so on). If not, the program director will then consult with your supervisor, your thesis committee, and other core clinical faculty to determine whether or not it would be appropriate for you to proceed further with the application process.

## **2) Fall of the Residency Application Year**

Students should apply to, interview at, and rank, via the Association of Psychology Postdoctoral and Internship Training Centers (APPIC) website, as many CPA and APA accredited residencies as reasonably possible.

*It is important to note that the program expects that all of our students will apply for and secure CPA or APA accredited residency placements.* Thus, as students engage in this process, they should keep the following information in mind, so as to maximize the possibility of a successful residency match.

- Based on APPIC survey data:
  - a) The average number of sites applicants apply to in Phase I is 14.4 (SD = 4.9).
  - b) Applicants end up ranking roughly 50% of the residencies to which they apply.
  - c) Matched Canadian applicants (2024 data) submitted an average of 6.5 rankings, whereas unmatched applicants submitted an average of 4 rankings.
- Some residency sites are considerably more competitive to obtain than other sites. This should be kept in mind when applying.
- Students should rank a minimum of 6 residency settings.

As students engage in the residency application process, they need to meet with the DCT at appropriate points during the application year, both to review the settings to which they are applying and subsequently ranking. The goal here is to maximize the likelihood that students will match successfully.

## **3) Notification of Residency Matching results**

### ***Successful Residency Applicants***

Successful students will be notified electronically by APPIC that they have matched and where they will be placed on residency. The DCT is also notified by the APPIC system.

### ***Unsuccessful Residency Applicants***

The Clinical Program has a strong record of students matching successfully with residency programs. Not matching with a residency is extremely difficult for students and they will benefit from additional support and guidance from the program. If a student learns through APPIC that they have not been matched with a residency, then they must immediately contact the DCT to arrange a meeting for that day. Students should be prepared to discuss with the DCT strategies they plan to use to secure a match via Phase II of the APPIC match. Many students who do not successfully match in the initial process can secure a match through Phase II.

## **4) Strengthening Residency Applications for Re-application**

The above procedures are designed to maximize student success in applying for a pre-doctoral residency. However, in the unfortunate event that a student does not match with any residency site for the first year application process, the following should occur to enhance the likelihood of a successful match in *the subsequent year*.

- *Strengthening of Residency Applications for subsequent year.* This can include taking more practica. The program also strongly encourages each student to solicit feedback from the residency settings applied to in the previous year, so that they can maximize the chance of being successful in the application process the next fall/winter. If students so desire (and, with their written permission), the DCT will attempt to solicit this feedback on their behalf, and convey the information to the students.
- *Finishing the Doctoral Dissertation.* Completion of the doctoral thesis prior to residency is viewed as a clear strength by residency sites. If a student successfully defends his or her thesis at the School of Postdoctoral and Graduate Studies (SPGS) PhD Examination prior to at least one term before the start of residency, then the DCT would make a request to the SPGS that the student be given a Leave of Absence until the residency commences.

#### **5) Re-applying in Year 2 for Residency after an Initial Year 1 Unsuccessful Match**

The procedure for students who are re-applying for an residency in Year 2, after not matching successfully in their initial application year, are the same as specified above in Sections 1-3. Students should also consider, with their supervisor and the DCT & CPC, the points advanced in Section 4.

#### **6) Procedure for students not matching after a 2<sup>nd</sup> Year Application**

Students must match to a CPA or APA accredited site in order to obtain their PhD in Psychology with specialization in Clinical Psychology. Students who do not successfully match after their second year of applying may not obtain specialization in Clinical Psychology.