

MASTER'S IN PSYCHOLOGY ACCREDITATION COUNCIL
POLICY AND PROCEDURE MANUAL

revised December 2006

The policies and procedures set forth in this manual are to be used as an adjunct to the Accreditation Manual. These two documents should ensure a fair and equitable process is followed in accrediting master's programs in psychology. The Council has adopted a philosophy of establishing procedures which are equitable to the programs applying, and which are not overly burdensome in terms of compliance. For those programs that choose to pursue accreditation, the Council wants to facilitate that process, not obstruct it. To that end, these procedures are subject to evaluation and change as needed, according to the established procedure for doing so. Programs already notified of eligibility to apply for accreditation review may use the procedures in effect at the time the process began or they may opt for the new procedures. New applicants will use the newer procedures.

MPAC Council members represent a constituency of educators involved in applied master's programs in psychology, practitioners with master's degrees in psychology, and the public consumers of mental health services. No less than one-seventh (1/7) of the voting MPAC members shall represent the public interests, and the remaining members shall fairly represent the remaining constituencies.

Whenever a vacancy shall occur on the Council, the Chair shall solicit nominations to fill the vacancy from the various constituencies. These nominations shall be presented to the full Council for a vote, and a nominee receiving at least a two-thirds (2/3) majority of the Council membership shall be elected to fill the vacant seat. This election shall typically occur at a regular meeting of the Council (or at the Council's annual meeting), but a special meeting may be convened at the Chair's discretion in order to elect a new Council member. Usual terms of office for voting members are 3 years with terms staggered such that two terms expire each year. With the exception of the lay member, who represents public consumers of psychological services, voting members must rotate off the Council after two consecutive three year terms. The lay member remains eligible for reappointment to subsequent three year terms. The Executive Director is a nonvoting member of the Council. The Executive Director is selected to a five year term and is eligible for reappointment.

I. Initial Contact

When a representative of a program initiates contact with MPAC and indicates an interest in pursuing accreditation, the Council Chair (or designee) will forward an Accreditation Manual to the representative. The Accreditation Manual includes a Pre-application Form which asks for information about the accreditation status of the institution which houses the interested program and the organizational position of the program, i.e., if it is identifiable as a psychology program, and other pertinent information. Once the Pre-application Form is returned to the Chair of MPAC, the Council Chair will determine if the program meets the basic requirements for continuing the process. The Council Chair will then notify the program representative and MPAC members of the eligibility of that program to apply for accreditation. If a program is not eligible to apply, then the program will be notified by the Council Chair of their status and what is required to qualify. At the same time the Chair notifies the program of its

status regarding the Pre-application Form, the Chair makes certain that the program has a current copy of the Accreditation Manual, and a list of currently accredited programs.

II. Time Limits

Programs are expected to complete their application within two (2) years from the date of notification of eligibility.

III. Self-Study

After receiving notification of eligibility for accreditation, the program will undertake an extensive self-study, which results in a self-study report. This report should document the program's compliance with the standards for accreditation set forth in the Accreditation Manual. Five copies of the self-study report and the application fee are to be submitted to the Chair of MPAC. Application fees are not refundable.

IV. Appointment of the Accreditation Review Committee

The Chair of the Council will appoint an Accreditation Review Committee (ARC). Generally, this will be a three (3) person subcommittee with at least two (2) persons coming from MPAC, one of who acts as the chair of the ARC. Members of the Council who have conflicts of interest with the program being considered will recuse themselves from service on the ARC for that program. The Chair of MPAC will distribute copies of the self-study and application to all members of the ARC. The Chair of the ARC will then communicate directly with the program representative until completion of the site visit.

V. The Accreditation Review Committee

The Chair of the ARC is responsible for communicating with committee members to determine their positions, communicating with the representative of the program seeking accreditation, and maintaining regular communication with the MPAC Chair.

After a suitable time, not to exceed sixty (60) days from the date of the appointment of the committee, the Chair of the ARC will respond in writing to the program representative and indicate one of the following: 1) that the self-study report is acceptable as is, with no further information/clarification needed; 2) that further information/clarification is needed for the committee to continue its evaluation; or 3) that the program does not appear to meet the criteria for accreditation and may want to reconsider the decision to go forward with it. When the self-study report has been finalized to the satisfaction of all members of the ARC, the Chair of the ARC will notify the program representative to begin planning for a site visit.

VI. The Site Visit

The ARC Chair is responsible for coordinating the site visit. The ARC chair will ask the program representative to suggest possible dates for the visit. The Chair of the ARC will communicate to the MPAC members at the next conference call or meeting that the program is ready for a site visit and will ask the Council to approve, by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the voting members, a list of suitable candidates for site visitors. The list of potential visitors will be forwarded to the program representative who may request deletions. The Chair of the ARC, who may not serve as site visitor, will coordinate the final selection of site visitors based on availability, willingness and board approval. One of the site visitors must be a member of the ARC and an MPAC member. The Chair of the ARC will also coordinate the arrangements for the site visit with the program representative, although site visitors may wish to communicate directly with the program representative to finalize arrangements. The Chair of MPAC is responsible for distributing copies of the self-study report and the Accreditation Manual to any site visitor that does not have one.

VII. Site Visit Report

The purpose of the site visit is to determine the accuracy of the self-study report, to share the expertise of the site visitors, and also to offer any recommendations for improvement that are not necessary for accreditation, but would improve the program. Therefore, site visitors are encouraged not to limit their investigation just to the standards, but also to investigate other aspects of the program, and offer any expertise they may have for potential improvements.

When the visit is completed, the site visitors will distribute a draft of their report to the Chair of the ARC within thirty (30) days. The Chair of the ARC forwards a copy of the report to the program representative. The program has the opportunity to correct any errors of fact by communicating with the Chair of the ARC within thirty (30) days. If agreement on errors of fact between the site visitors and the program representative cannot be reached within sixty (60) days, the Chair of the ARC will consult the Council concerning the discrepancies. If the Council perceives the discrepancies are vital to the granting of accredited status, the Chair may appoint another Council member as a mediator between the site visitors and the program representative, or may decide to arrange for another site visit. Once agreement is reached, the final site visit report is sent to the Chair of the ARC.

VIII. Final ARC Report

The Chair of the ARC composes the final ARC report, and with the agreement of all members of the ARC, forwards the final report to all members of MPAC for a vote.

IX. Final Vote

At the next Council meeting, the Chair of MPAC will present the recommendation of the ARC and call for a vote on the accreditation of the program for up to ten (10) years. A two-thirds (2/3) majority of the voting Council members is required for accreditation. Absentee votes may be cast by contacting the Chair of MPAC. Council members that have a conflict of interest with the program being voted on will recuse themselves from the vote and the deliberations. In the event the ARC has determined there are some deficiencies which require remediation, but they are not of sufficient magnitude to deny accreditation, the ARC may request that the Council vote on granting accreditation for two (2) or five (5) years. The program would then be required to follow the procedure in the Accreditation Manual to correct the deficiencies and be re-accredited at the end of the two (2) or five (5) year period. The Chair of the Council will notify the program of its accreditation status, and in the case of two (2) or five (5) year accreditation, the deficiencies that must be addressed.

Because decisions of the Council are based largely on the ARC report, appeals of Council decisions are made to the Council as a whole. Programs must follow the appeals procedure outlined in the Accreditation Manual. The appeal process authorizes continuation of current accreditation status of the program until an appeal decision is rendered.

X. Publication of Accreditation Status of Institutions

The Chair of the Council will maintain a current list of accredited programs and will distribute as needed or requested.

XI. Confidentiality of Materials

All materials associated with the process of accreditation are considered confidential and may only be released with the written consent of the program, which generated the materials. One copy of the materials used in the process of accreditation will be maintained in the central office of MPAC.

XII. Maintenance of Accredited Status

Each program is required to submit a continuation report to the Executive Director of the Council every three (3) years. The Executive Director forwards copies of these reports to the Council members for review. A vote on the acceptability of the report will be taken at the next Council meeting. A two-thirds (2/3) vote is required to accept the report. If it is not acceptable, the Council may request further information or any other action, which might be deemed appropriate. Failure to comply with such requests will be taken as evidence that a program does not wish to maintain its accredited status and its status may be terminated by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of Council members. The MPAC Executive Director will notify the program of the Council's action.

Every three (3) years, at the time of the continuation report for accredited programs, the Executive Director of the Council will request information related to the impact of accreditation on the program, the institution, the students, and the public.

XIII. Re-accreditation

At least twelve (12) months prior to the expiration of its accreditation, the Executive Director of the Council will notify programs of their status. Programs wishing to pursue re-accreditation will follow the accreditation process currently in effect. In the case of an appeal of a decision to re-accredit a program, the accreditation status of the program will be maintained until the conclusion of the appeal.

XIV. Annual Report

The Chair of the Council will prepare an annual report to be presented to all Council members for approval by a majority vote. The annual report will be distributed to all applicant and accredited programs, and published as deemed necessary by the Council. A record of annual reports will be maintained in the central office and will be made available to anyone who wishes to see it. The report will summarize the activities of the Council for the previous year and include a list of all accredited programs.

XV. Reviews and Planning

At the end of each calendar year, the Executive Director of the Council will distribute a survey approved by a majority vote of the Council to all programs accredited that year to assess the process of accreditation. At least once every five (5) years, the Council will develop and implement an appropriate method to survey master's programs in psychology, members of the Council of Applied Master's Programs in Psychology, and selected employers and consumers for their opinions on training standards related to accreditation, as well as their current practices. The Council will consider these responses in any deliberations regarding changes in standards or in the policies and procedures.

XVI. Changes in Policies and Procedures

These policies and procedures may be changed in any manner at any time by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Council members, and must be reviewed by the Council at least every five (5) years.

GENERAL OPERATIONS

The following guidelines shall govern the day-to-day operations of the Council.

1. The chair, secretary, and treasurer of the Council will be selected from among the voting Council members and serve one year terms. The secretary is responsible for keeping minutes of all meetings, and the treasurer is responsible for authorizing expenditures with the approval of the Executive Director. The Executive Director provides effective articulation and coordination of the Council's concerns and is advisor to the Council on all appropriate matters.
2. All fees will be deposited in a central MPAC account.
3. The Executive Director of the Council and the Treasurer must authorize all expenditures. The treasurer must submit an annual report to the Council. The fiscal year is July 1 to June 30 of each year.
4. All records are to be kept in a permanent file in a central office.
5. Although much of the business of the Council may be conducted by electronic means, the Council will meet once each year face-to-face. Council members must receive 30 days notice for that meeting.
6. Applicants for accreditation bear all costs of the site visit, and will reimburse site visitors directly for their expenses.
7. If a vacancy on the Council occurs before the expiration of a term of office, the remaining Council members will elect a replacement to complete the term. At the completion of the original term, the member may be re-elected for an additional two terms.
8. Two-thirds (2/3) of the Council members is a quorum. Normal business can be conducted without a quorum, but no votes may be taken.