



# **The Arc of Central Alabama Behavior Support**

**Psychology Internship Program**

The Arc of Central Alabama – Serving People Through Their Lifetimes

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## Site Information

The Arc of Central Alabama was founded in 1953 and serves people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) across the lifespan. The Arc's mission is to provide comprehensive and quality programming, engage in advocacy efforts, and promote education and awareness so each person affected by IDD can reach their fullest potential and live a life that is meaningful to them.

The Arc of Central Alabama is in Birmingham, Alabama's largest metropolitan area and cultural and entertainment capital. In addition to training in the Birmingham metro area (Jefferson County), interns can also provide services in rural Alabama communities in Blount and Walker Counties.

The Arc of Central Alabama's internship training primarily occurs at the agency's main office in Birmingham, Alabama. The Arc of Central Alabama's facilities are professional, welcoming, and supportive, created to be ideal environments for staff, the 1000-plus intellectually disabled people served by The Arc, and their families.

### **Key Features of the Location:**

#### **1. Main Office Facilities**

- Offices and meeting rooms equipped with necessary technology for training and telehealth services.
- Access to spaces and materials needed for psychological evaluations and interventions.

#### **2. Client-Centered Spaces**

- Comfortable waiting areas for clients and their families.
- Therapy rooms conducive to various therapeutic activities, including teaching adaptive skills (e.g., functional communication) and adapted cognitive-behavioral therapy.
- A day habilitation program serving approximately 50 intellectually disabled adults.
  - Intellectual disabled adults who attend The Arc day program may choose to spend time with their peers and employees of The Arc at the main Crestwood campus, engage in individual and group leisure activities (e.g., crafts, music class, gardening, gym), or go out to community locations (e.g., libraries, parks, museums, restaurants) with peers and staff.

### 3. Community Integration

- Opportunities to engage with various community programs and services, including over 60 group homes.
- Proximity to other health and social services, facilitating comprehensive care for people served.

More information about living and working in the Birmingham area can be found at the following sites:

City of Birmingham, AL <https://www.birminghamal.gov/>

Greater Birmingham Convention & Visitors Bureau <https://www.birminghamal.org/>



# Psychology Training Overview

Internship positions (up to 6) are funded by The Arc of Central Alabama. Dr. Sarah Holmes is the Training Director ([sarah.holmes@arcofcentralalabama.org](mailto:sarah.holmes@arcofcentralalabama.org)). Dr. Erich Grommet is the Vice President of Behavior Support and Chief Psychologist ([erich.grommet@arcofcentralalabama.org](mailto:erich.grommet@arcofcentralalabama.org)). Dr. Carmen Britton is the Research Director ([carmen.britton@arcofcentralalabama.org](mailto:carmen.britton@arcofcentralalabama.org)), and Casey Bailey is the Clinical Director ([casey.bailey@arcofcentralalabama.org](mailto:casey.bailey@arcofcentralalabama.org)).

The Arc of Central Alabama's internship program operates within the Behavior Support Department, which is composed of two, full-time licensed psychologists, master's level Board Certified Behavior Analysts (BCBAs), Registered Behavior Technicians (RBTs), and an administrative and billing support specialist.

The program offers interns training experience providing psychological services to adolescents and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities. We provide services to individuals in their residences (i.e., group homes) and in the community (i.e., the day rehabilitation programs at The Arc campus in Jefferson County and Blount County and various public community locations).

The Arc of Central Alabama Behavior Support also provides consultation and behavioral intervention to individuals served by The Arc of Walker County (northwest of Birmingham, AL).

The program provides interns with a laptop, shared office space, mileage reimbursement, and administrative support during their internship year.

## Accreditation Status

The Arc of Central Alabama Behavior Support Psychology Internship is not yet accredited by the American Psychological Association (APA). We intend to seek APA accreditation and will support interns in providing all necessary internship information to state licensing boards.

## Selection Procedures

### Eligibility

A candidate for The Arc of Central Alabama Behavior Support Psychology Internship Program is considered based on the following:

- Candidates must show verified progression within a doctoral program in professional psychology (Clinical, School, or Counseling) that is APA-accredited or in the process of APA accreditation with reasonable likelihood of success.
  - Official graduate transcripts and a letter of verification from the applicant's Graduate Training Director should clearly document the applicant's completion of all academic and practicum experiences required prior to internship.
- There are no minimum required assessment or intervention hours for application.
- Given the program's emphasis on applied behavior analysis, applicants who are Board Certified Behavior Analysts (BCBA) or are interested in seeking certification are highly encouraged to apply.

Interested individuals who meet the eligibility criteria should apply via the APPIC Application for Psychology Internships (AAPI) portal. Further guidance on applying via the portal and outside of the APPIC match-cycle can be found on APPIC's website (<https://www.appic.org/>).

Required application materials include:

- A cover letter indicating intent to apply to the internship and training interests
- A curriculum vita
- Official graduate transcript(s)
- A letter of verification from the applicant's Graduate Training Director
- Three letters of reference from individuals familiar with the applicant's clinical skills (not including the letter of verification from the Graduate Training Director)

# Training Model and Program Goals

The Arc of Central Alabama's health service psychology doctoral internship program aims to provide comprehensive training to prospective psychologists using a **behavioral, scientist-practitioner approach**. We prepare interns for independent practice, emphasizing supporting intellectually disabled people in developing a meaningful quality of life.

Psychology interns develop skills in the nine Profession-Wide Competency (PWC) areas defined by the American Psychological Association (APA):

1. **Research:** Interns develop the skills to effectively integrate the research literature and evidence-based practices into their clinical work. Interns develop a commitment to and appreciation for engaging with research advances in applied behavior analysis and other sub-disciplines of psychology.

**Evaluation:** We formally evaluate interns' original or case-relevant research presentations. Supervisors encourage and provide ongoing, prompt feedback on interns' integration of research literature in practice for assessment and intervention. At least twice during the training year, supervisors directly observe and formally evaluate interns' competency in research and provide specific feedback.

2. **Ethical and Legal Standards:** Interns apply ethical decision-making skills to clinical and research activities, communicate effectively, and engage in multidisciplinary collaboration (e.g., with psychiatry and other medical services, residential services, and community services).

**Evaluation:** We regularly review ethical decision-making in treatment planning during clinical supervision. During group supervision, interns participate in didactic presentations and discussions, including ethical dilemmas. Supervisors formally evaluate interns' competency in ethics and legal standards twice during the internship year and provide specific, informal feedback throughout the year.

3. **Individual and Cultural Diversity:** Interns gain experience working with individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (including autistic and dually diagnosed people) in their homes, day programs, and communities.

**Evaluation:** We work with interns to consider individual differences in treatment planning and regularly discuss this topic during individual and group supervision. We also set measurable goals accounting for individual differences in clinical and research contexts and revisit them throughout



training. At least twice during the training year, supervisors formally evaluate interns' competency in culturally sensitive practice and provide specific feedback.

4. **Professional Values, Attitudes, and Behavior:** The program supports interns' personal and professional development through guided self-reflection, individualized mentorship, and performance feedback. We help interns develop professional confidence and further establish their professional identity.

**Evaluation:** Supervisors and interns collaborate to set individualized goals for the training year and regularly review progress toward these goals during supervision. At least twice during the training year, supervisors formally evaluate interns' competency in engaging in professional behavior and provide specific feedback.

5. **Communication and Interpersonal Skills:** The program emphasizes the paramount importance of establishing a therapeutic alliance with clients and other stakeholders to maximize the likelihood of positive clinical outcomes. Interns communicate with a variety of stakeholders during the program and are expected to tailor their communication to their audience via various means (e.g., casual, "warm handoffs," formal written communication, behavioral skills training with others across professions). Interns develop fluency in engaging in conceptually systematic, socially valid communication with all stakeholders.

**Evaluation:** Supervisors model various approaches to communicating with stakeholders, emphasizing an individualized approach to communication to foster therapeutic alliances. Supervisors provide specific, timely feedback to interns when they directly observe interns communicating with stakeholders. Supervisors formally evaluate interns' competency in communication and interpersonal skills twice during the training year.

6. **Assessment:** Interns refine their clinical skills in assessing various presenting concerns with intellectually disabled people.

**Evaluation:** Clinical supervisors conduct 2 hours of individual supervision with each intern each week. During these sessions, interns discuss their cases, assessment plans, and any clinical decisions made based on completed assessments with their supervisors. Supervisors approve all assessment plans. At least twice during the training year, supervisors directly observe and formally evaluate interns' competency in assessment and provide specific feedback.



7. **Intervention:** Interns refine their clinical skills in intervention for various presenting concerns with intellectually disabled people.

**Evaluation:** Clinical supervisors conduct 2 hours of individual supervision with each intern each week. During these sessions, interns discuss their cases, treatment plans, and any clinical decisions with their supervisors before and during the treatment process. Supervisors approve all treatment plans before and throughout implementation. At least twice during the training year, supervisors directly observe and formally evaluate interns' competency in intervention and provide specific feedback.

8. **Supervision:** Interns apply their clinical knowledge when interacting with fellow interns and other health professionals. Interns observe, evaluate, and give guidance and feedback to direct support professionals throughout the internship year.

**Evaluation:** Clinical supervisors model evidence-based supervisory practices, including balance evaluation and specific, immediate feedback. Interns collaborate with direct support professionals in a supervisory role. Supervisors directly observe and formally evaluate interns' competency in supervision twice during the training year.

9. **Consultation and Interprofessional/Interdisciplinary Skills:** Interns receive opportunities organically during major and minor rotations to learn about the roles and perspectives of support team members of other professions (e.g., psychiatry, nursing, residential services staff, intra-agency support coordination, extra-agency support coordination). Interns also collaborate with each client and their stakeholders (e.g., family members who support clients in making decisions, legal guardians) to prioritize individuals' preferences and values in clinical care.

**Evaluation:** We provide interns opportunities to actively engage with other professionals who are a part of each client's multi-disciplinary support team (e.g., psychiatric clinic, team meetings). Supervisors directly observe and formally evaluate interns' competency in consultation twice during the training year.

# Program Structure

## Program Content

Clinical supervisors collaborate with interns to establish individualized goals for the training year based on previous training experiences, internship skill acquisition goals, and future professional goals.

Interns participate in one year-long major rotation providing Behavior Support services and the Psychological Services Clinic (PSC) to individuals served in Jefferson County. Clinical activities include designing and implementing Behavior Support Plans (BSP) and conducting adapted individual therapy (e.g., cognitive-behavioral therapy, trauma-focused therapy, or acceptance-commitment training) with verbally fluent individuals.

Interns participate in a minor rotation, providing behavioral consultation to individuals served by The Arc of Walker County, a partner organization.

Interns spend at least 25% of their week delivering direct services (10 hours or more).

A sample weekly schedule for an intern is below.

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8:00 AM					
8:30 AM			Behavioral consultation, intervention, and/or assessment at a partner organization	Administrative tasks (data analysis, BSP writing, progress notes, case research)	
9:00 AM	Individual clinical supervision	Staff training, assessment, or intervention at Jefferson County group homes or day program			Group supervision
9:30 AM					Intern didactic seminar
10:00 AM					
10:30 AM					
11:00 AM					
11:30 AM	Behavior Support Department Meeting, Journal Club, Grand Rounds				
12:00 PM					
12:30 PM		Co-therapy with vocal-verbal people served (adapted CBT, ACT, DBT, MI, or trauma-focused therapy as clinically indicated)			
1:00 PM					
1:30 PM					
2:00 PM					
2:30 PM			Administrative tasks (data analysis, BSP writing, progress notes, case research)		
3:00 PM					
3:30 PM					
4:00 PM	Staff training, assessment, or intervention at Jefferson County group homes				
4:30 PM					
5:00 PM					

## Internship Rotation Descriptions

**1. Behavior Support,** Jefferson County group homes and the Crestwood day program at The Arc's main campus in Birmingham (6001 Crestwood Blvd., Birmingham, AL 35212).

**Rotation Type:** Major (occurs concurrently with Psychological Services Clinic rotation)

**Clinical Supervisor:** Sarah C. Holmes, Ph.D., BCBA-D, LP, LBA

**Settings/Clinical Activities:** Interns have the opportunity to provide applied behavior analytic services to individuals who reside in group homes in Jefferson County and individuals who attend the day program at The Arc's main campus. Interns will provide direct services in clusters of group homes in the western part of Birmingham and in Centerpoint, Alabama, approximately twenty minutes north of The Arc's main campus. Approximately 50 individuals reside across the group homes interns serve, providing extensive experience with individuals with various skills and presenting problems. Individuals who require Behavior Support services often present with intense externalizing behavior such as aggression toward others, property destruction, pica, self-injury, or elopement. Interns and clinical supervisors collaborate to develop behavior support plans to address presenting concerns. Interns build rapport with and train direct support staff in residential homes and the day program to implement Behavior Support Plans with fidelity to reduce the likelihood of challenging behavior and teach individuals functionally equivalent, adaptive replacement behavior (e.g., functional communication, engagement in leisure activities). Opportunities are available for interns to conduct Functional Behavior Assessments, develop Behavior Support Plans, teach functional communication, train staff to implement behavior reduction and skill acquisition programs, participate in support team meetings, and engage in interdisciplinary collaboration with psychiatry, nursing, and case management.

**2. Psychological Services Clinic (PSC),** The Arc main campus in Birmingham on Crestwood Blvd.

**Rotation Type:** Major (occurs concurrently with Behavior Support rotation)

**Clinical Supervisor:** Sarah C. Holmes, Ph.D., BCBA-D, LP, LBA

**Settings/Clinical Activities:** Interns provide adapted behavioral therapy to individuals served by The Arc who do not currently receive behavioral therapy in the community. Opportunities to conduct brief psychological evaluations, especially for aging individuals who exhibit signs of cognitive decline, are also

available as a part of this rotation. Common presenting concerns for individuals who receive behavioral therapy include anxiety, depression, a history of trauma, and interpersonal difficulties with peers, staff, or their employers. Interns and clinical supervisors collaborate to select appropriate evidence-based treatments depending on individuals' presenting concerns and adapt treatments to individuals' cognitive and behavioral skills. Individuals who receive behavioral therapy are typically verbally fluent, mild to moderate intellectually disabled people, and many of these individuals have a co-occurring diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder or an anxiety disorder. Interns are expected to engage in co-therapy with their supervisor, becoming more independent, and transition to managing one to two behavioral therapy cases by mid-year in this rotation.

### **3. Behavioral Consultation, The Arc of Walker County, Jasper, AL**

**Rotation Type:** Minor (occurs concurrently with Behavior Support and CAPS major rotations)

**Clinical Supervisor:** Erich K. Grommet, Ph.D., BCBA-D, LP, LBA

**Settings/Clinical Activities:** Interns provide behavioral consultation services for individuals served by The Arc of Walker County, a partner organization to The Arc of Central Alabama. The county seat of Walker County and main location of service provision is Jasper, Alabama, approximately forty-five minutes northwest of The Arc of Central Alabama's main campus. Behavioral consultation services are provided both on-site in Walker County and via telehealth. Similar to services provided to individuals in Jefferson County, individuals who require behavioral consultation often present with intense externalizing behavior such as aggression toward others, property destruction, pica, self-injury, or elopement. Interns and clinical supervisors collaborate to either develop behavior support plans for individuals in Walker County who require a plan or collaborate with Walker County staff to revise and modify existing Behavior Support Plans already in effect. Interns build rapport with and train direct support staff in residential homes to implement Behavior Support Plans with fidelity to reduce the likelihood of challenging behavior and teach individuals functionally equivalent, adaptive replacement behavior (e.g., functional communication, engagement in leisure activities). Opportunities are available for interns to conduct Functional Behavior Assessments, develop Behavior Support Plans, and provide ongoing behavioral consultation to staff in Walker County to supplement on-site, direct training.

## Client Population

Our program provides comprehensive training for psychology interns interested in assessment and intervention with intellectually and developmentally disabled people:

- **Age Range:** Interns work with individuals across the lifespan. We primarily serve adults ages 21 through the end of life.
- **Impairment Level:** Interns work with clients with Mild, Moderate, Severe, and Profound intellectual disabilities.
  - Many individuals we serve also have a diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder and meet the criteria for Profound Autism.
- **Individual Differences:** Interns practice cultural humility with clients from various cultural, ethnic, and socioeconomic backgrounds.
- **Co-occurring Conditions:** Interns learn to address additional mental health issues such as anxiety, depression, and trauma experienced by people with developmental disabilities.

We ensure interns thoroughly understand the field by working in group homes, day programs, and various community and vocational settings across several counties.

## Assessment and Intervention Activities

### Assessment

Interns conduct psychological assessments in both major and minor rotations. Expected assessment experiences include:

#### 1. Broadband and Narrowband Psychological and Behavior Analytic Tools

- **Intelligence, Neuropsychological, and Language Testing:** Interns receive training in administering, scoring, and interpreting various standardized intelligence, neuropsychological, and language tests when a client's functioning level may have declined (e.g., following a health event or suspected dementia), extant assessment results do not seem to characterize a client well, or it is otherwise warranted.
- **Social-Emotional-Behavioral Assessment:** Interns learn to conduct functional behavioral assessments and use tools like the Achenbach System of Empirically Based Assessment Adult Self-Report, the Adult Behavior Checklist, the Behavior Problems Inventory, and the Aberrant Behavior Checklist.
- **Adaptive Skill Assessment:** Training includes conducting assessments, such as Essential for Living, Assessment of Functional Living Skills, and the Vineland Adaptive Behavior Scales.

- **Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA):** Interns learn to identify variables maintaining problem behavior using tools, such as functional assessment interviews, antecedent-behavior-consequence data collection, the Questions About Behavior Function, and functional analysis.
- **Preference Assessment:** Interns learn to conduct the Reinforcer Assessment for Individuals with Severe Disability, free-operant preference assessment, single-stimulus preference assessment, paired-stimulus preference assessment, and multiple-stimulus preference assessment, among others.
- **Priority Outcomes Assessment:** Interns collaborate with intellectually disabled people to determine clients' priorities by learning to conduct and adapt The Council on Quality and Leadership's Personal Outcomes Measures assessment.

## 2. Supervised Clinical Experience

- **Case Supervision:** We supervise all assessment cases and provide detailed feedback and guidance. Supervisors help interns refine their assessment skills, interpret results accurately, and develop comprehensive reports.
- **Team Meetings:** Interns participate in multidisciplinary team meetings to present their assessment findings and collaborate with other professionals (e.g., psychiatrists and case workers) to develop integrated treatment plans.

## 3. Didactic Training and Workshops

- **Seminars:** Regular seminars and workshops cover various topics related to assessment. These sessions include instruction on assessment tools, ethical considerations, and cultural competence in assessment.
- **Case Studies:** Interns engage in case study discussions that highlight complex assessment scenarios, diagnosis, and best practices in interpretation and reporting.

## 4. Comprehensive Report Writing

- **Report Writing Skills:** Interns receive training in writing clear, concise, and comprehensive behavior support plans.
- **Feedback Sessions:** Supervisors review interns' reports and provide constructive feedback, focusing on clarity, organization, and clinical utility. Interns also practice sensitively and effectively delivering feedback to clients, families, and direct support professionals.

## 5. Ethical and Cultural Considerations

- **Ethical Training:** We train interns to adhere to ethical assessment guidelines, including issues related to informed consent, confidentiality, and the appropriate use of assessment tools.
- **Cultural Competence:** Training emphasizes the importance of cultural competence in assessment. Interns learn to consider cultural, linguistic, and socioeconomic factors influencing assessment outcomes and interpretations.

## 6. Continuous Evaluation and Improvement

- **Performance Evaluations:** Supervisors regularly evaluate interns' assessment skills. These evaluations identify strengths and areas for improvement, guiding the intern's ongoing professional development.
- **Feedback Mechanisms:** We encourage interns to provide feedback on the training program, including their assessment training. This feedback helps the program continually refine and enhance its training offerings.

## 7. Integration of Assessment with Intervention

- **Assessment-Driven Interventions:** The program emphasizes the integration of assessment results with intervention planning. Interns learn how to use assessment data to inform therapeutic goals, monitor progress, and adjust treatment strategies.
- **Case Integration:** Interns are involved in cases where they conduct initial assessments, develop treatment plans based on their findings, and implement interventions. This integrated approach ensures a holistic understanding of client care.

## Intervention

Interns conduct evidence-based psychological intervention in both major and minor rotations. Expected intervention experiences across rotations include:

### 1. Supervised Clinical Experience

- **Environmental Modification:** Interns learn to modify social and physical environments to minimize the occurrence of challenging behavior and increase adaptive behavior and prosocial interactions.
- **Staff Training:** Interns learn to collaborate with direct support professionals on teaching skills and strategies for preventing and reducing challenging behavior.
- **Individual Therapy:** Interns provide one-on-one therapy under close supervision, allowing for personalized intervention strategies.



- **Family and Caregiver Involvement:** Interns learn to work collaboratively with families, providing psychoeducation and support to enhance treatment outcomes.
- **Community-Based Interventions:** The program offers opportunities to implement interventions in various settings, including group homes, and community centers.

## 2. Didactic Training and Workshops

- **Seminars on Evidence-Based Practices:** Regular seminars cover applied behavior analytic and cognitive-behavioral topics, trauma-informed care, ethical considerations in intervention, and systematically adapting evidenced-based treatments for intellectually disabled people.
- **Case Presentations:** Interns present intervention cases and receive feedback to refine their clinical reasoning and intervention skills.

## 3. Integration of Assessment with Intervention

- **Assessment-Driven Treatment Planning:** Interns learn to develop individualized intervention plans based on functional behavioral assessments
- **Progress Monitoring:** Training includes data collection and analysis to monitor client progress and adjust interventions accordingly.
- **Functional Behavior Assessments (FBA):** Interns conduct FBAs to identify proximal causes of behaviors and develop effective intervention strategies.

## 4. Ethical and Cultural Considerations

- **Ethics Training:** The program emphasizes adherence to ethical guidelines, especially confidentiality, informed consent, and professional boundaries.
- **Cultural Sensitivity:** Interns learn to effectively adapt interventions to respect the cultural values and beliefs of people served.

## 5. Continuous Evaluation and Professional Development

- **Regular Supervision:** Each intern receives at least 2 hours of individual supervision weekly focused on clinical care and professional growth.
- **Performance Evaluations:** Supervisors provide ongoing feedback, highlighting strengths and areas for improvement.
- **Self-Reflection:** Interns are encouraged to engage in self-reflection to enhance self-awareness and professional development.

## 6. Commitment of Time to Direct Intervention

- **Face-to-Face Services:** Interns dedicate at least 25% of their time to providing direct psychological services to clients.
- **Varied Caseload:** Interns manage a diverse caseload requiring a variety of intervention methods and modalities to meet needs.

## 7. Interdisciplinary Collaboration

- **Team Approach:** Interns collaborate with a multidisciplinary team of psychologists, behavior analysts, speech therapists, and occupational therapists.
- **Consultation Skills:** Training includes consulting with other professionals and caregivers to support client progress across environments.

## 8. Specialized Intervention Areas

- **Crisis Intervention:** Training includes managing crises safely and effectively with de-escalation techniques and adapted suicide risk assessment.
- **Vocational Training Support:** Interns assist clients in developing skills necessary for employment and independent living.
- **Health and Wellness Promotion:** Interventions address overall well-being, including physical health, nutrition, exercise, and sleep.

## Supervision

Interns receive at least four hours of weekly supervision, including two hours of individual supervision to discuss clinical activities.

Interns also receive direct supervision of their clinical activities and engage in co-therapy with their supervisor each week for at least one hour. Direct supervision occurs across clinical settings (e.g., group homes, day programs, partner-organization sites). Some examples of direct supervision include an intern co-leading staff training on a Behavior Support Plan with their supervisor at a group home, conducting co-therapy with their clinical supervisor, or completing semi-structured interviews or other measures for a Functional Behavioral Assessment while their supervisor observes. The independence of an intern as the primary clinician in direct supervisory interactions is expected to increase across the internship year.

Group supervision occurs each week and consists of case conferences, research article discussions, or discussions about topics related to the practice of psychology.

## **Didactics**

Didactic intern seminars occur each Friday except for the fifth Friday of the month. Intern seminars include a didactic presentation on a clinical topic or a professional development topic. Whole group and small group discussion opportunities are incorporated throughout the seminar. At least one additional hour of didactic training (journal article discussion, case conference, or a clinical topic presentation) takes place during the Behavior Support department meeting on the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Mondays of each month.

# **Interns' Rights and Responsibilities**

## **Intern Rights**

1. The right to a clear statement of general rights and responsibilities upon entry into the internship, including a clear statement of the goals and parameters of the training experience.
2. The right to be trained by psychologists who follow the APA Ethics Code.
3. The right to be treated with professional respect and recognition of training and experience.
4. The right to ongoing evaluation that is actionable and respectful.
5. The right to engage in an ongoing evaluation of the training program.
6. The right to initiate informal resolution of problematic training experiences (e.g., supervision assignments) through discussion or written request if an informal resolution has failed to resolve grievances.
7. The right to respect for personal privacy.

## **Intern Responsibilities**

1. The responsibility to read, understand, and clarify the statement of rights and responsibilities. Interns must satisfy these responsibilities to demonstrate competence.
2. The responsibility to behave consistent with the American Psychological Association's and The Arc of Central Alabama's principles found in the American Psychological Association's Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct and The Arc of Central Alabama Employee Handbook, respectively.
3. The responsibility to respond to professional feedback from supervisors, professional staff, and agency personnel.
4. The responsibility to prioritize the well-being of individuals to whom the intern provides psychological services.
5. The responsibility to behave in a manner that promotes professional interactions consistent The Arc of Central Alabama's expectations.
6. The responsibility to give constructive feedback that evaluates the training experience or other experiences in the training program.
7. The responsibility to engage in professional behavior in the context of due process.
8. The responsibility to actively participate in training and clinical service provision through The Arc of Central Alabama. This includes but is not limited to promptly completing documentation, attending department meetings and seminars, and

completing and submitting a monthly log of internship activities to the Training Director.

9. The responsibility to meet internship expectations by developing competency in (1) research; (2) ethical and legal standards; (3) respect for individual differences; (4) professional values, attitudes, and behaviors, (5) communication and interpersonal skills; (6) assessment; (7) intervention; (8) supervision; (9) consultation and interprofessional/interdisciplinary skills.

# Intern Performance Evaluation

Interns are expected to develop competency in the elements that comprise the nine Profession-Wide Competency (PWC) areas defined by The American Psychological Association (APA):

1. Research
2. Ethical and Legal Standards
3. Individual and Cultural Diversity
4. Professional Values, Attitudes, and Behavior
5. Communication and Interpersonal Skills
6. Assessment
7. Intervention
8. Supervision
9. Consultation and Interprofessional/Interdisciplinary skills

Supervisors and interns provide informal performance feedback throughout the training year. Formal intern evaluations take place mid-year and at the end of the internship. Mid-year evaluations allow for areas of growth to be identified and corresponding training goals set to maximize the likelihood of successful internship completion. The mid-year and end-of-year evaluations will be placed in the intern's permanent file and shared with the intern's graduate training director.

We rate interns' performance based on the competency they demonstrate with respect to each element of each PWC using the following scale:

- 1 – Pre-Internship
- 2 – Beginning Internship
- 3 – Mid-Year Competency Minimum
- 4 – End-of-Year, Entry-Level Practice Competency Minimum
- 5 – Exceptional, Advanced Practice Competency

The competency scale of 1 to 5 represents the typical competency progression during the internship year. It is expected that most interns' skills will be best captured by ratings of 2-3 at the beginning of internship, 3-4 at midyear, and 4-5 at the end of internship.

To successfully complete the internship, interns' skill development must merit a rating of 4 or above for each element at the end of the internship year. This means that the intern must be able to independently engage in various clinical and professional activities, demonstrate skills fluently, and determine when to seek more training or consultation.

Interns are also responsible for evaluating the internship program. Interns evaluate program content and supervisors via anonymous forms and during an exit interview at the end of the internship.

## **Pre-internship Employment Requirements**

**All Arc of Central Alabama employees, including interns, must submit copies of all high school and post-secondary (e.g., colleges & universities) diplomas and undergo a national background check, drug screening, and tuberculosis testing before employment.**

- Background checks consist of the following personal identifiers: name, social security number, date of birth, and state-issued identification (e.g., driver's license, non-driver's license identification).
- Potential interns must complete pre-employment drug screening and a tuberculosis (TB) skin test.

The Arc of Central Alabama Psychology Training Director can provide additional information regarding pre-internship employment requirements upon request in collaboration with the Human Resources Department.



# **Internship Completion Requirements**

Satisfactory completion of the internship requires the following:

- Average ratings of 4 (End-of-Year Competent) in all profession-wide competency areas on end-of-year evaluations
- Satisfactory rating on research presentation
- Equivalent of one year of a full-time training internship (2000 hours)

## Due Process

The Arc of Central Alabama's Psychology Internship Program adheres to the following guidelines to ensure that intern training proceeds fairly. We give interns a copy of and review this manual at the outset of training.

1. All interns receive a written statement of professional behavioral expectations.
2. Evaluation processes and expectations are outlined clearly at training outset.
3. All interns receive a written statement outlining the remediation process should an intern exhibit behavior that could impede successful completion of internship including unsatisfactory progress toward attaining competency as documented in formal evaluations.
4. The Directors of Clinical Training from interns' home graduate program are informed about behavior that could impede an intern's program completion.
5. Formal remediation plans are implemented which define specific and time-limited goals toward addressing problematic behavior and the consequences for inadequate progress toward meeting the goals of remediation.
6. All interns receive a written statement outlining how to appeal programmatic decisions and receive adequate time to appeal.
7. Programmatic decisions related to intern performance and the decisions' justification are documented in writing and based on input from multiple sources.

## Notice, Hearing, and Appeal

We will provide supervisory feedback and other training throughout the program to promote progress toward professional competencies. If problematic behavior occurs, interns will receive feedback and if indicated, an informal warning. However, in rare instances, a formal notice of concern and remediation plan may be warranted.

### Notice

If problematic behavior addressed with an initial, informal warning persists OR an intern does not meet minimum levels of achievement at their mid-year evaluation, the Training Director will provide the intern and the Director of Clinical Training of their home graduate program a written notice of concern. In the initial notice, the Training Director outlines a proposed remediation plan and the implications of unsatisfactory behavior change on competency development.

The notice clearly defines the discrepancy between the intern's performance and program expectations. Remediation plans will include a proposed deadline by which interns must demonstrate satisfactory remediation.

## Hearing

Within no more than five (5) business days of any formal notice (i.e., remediation notice, probation notice, termination notice), the intern, Training Director, and the intern's graduate program Director of Clinical Training will meet to give the intern an opportunity to hear and respond to the concerns leading to the notice.

The Training Director will decide whether to proceed with actions outlined in the notice within 48 hours of the hearing.

## Remediation

If the Training Director decides proceeding with remediation is warranted, the intern and their graduate program will be provided a copy of the remediation plan to sign. A copy of the plan signed by the intern, their Director of Clinical Training, and the internship Training Director, a copy of other pertinent written feedback, and progress monitoring of remediation efforts will be included in the intern's file.

The remediation plan is reviewed weekly in individual clinical supervision with the intern's clinical supervisor. Progress (whether satisfactory or unsatisfactory) toward meeting the goals of the remediation plan will be discussed each week and documented in writing.

If the intern meets the remediation plan goal prior to the originally set deadline, the Training Director will give the intern and their Director of Clinical Training written acknowledgment of satisfactory remediation.

If the intern does not meet the remediation goal by the originally set deadline, the Training Director will provide the intern and their Director of Clinical Training a probation notice followed by a hearing as described above.

## Probation

Probation consists of a clearly defined period of concentrated supervision beyond what is typically provided during the training program.

If the intern meets the remediation plan goals by the end of the probationary period, the intern will receive a written acknowledgment of satisfactory remediation.

## Termination

If the intern does not meet the remediation goal by the end of the probationary period, the Training Director will consult with The Arc of Central Alabama's Human Resources Department to consider termination.

If termination is determined to be the only path forward, the Training Director will provide the intern and their Director of Clinical Training a termination notice (followed by a hearing as described above).

Termination is considered as the last resort. Terminated interns will not receive a certificate of internship completion.

### **Immediate Termination**

We may terminate an intern without the remediation process if they abandon the internship under certain circumstances, for example:

- Five consecutive working days of absence without prior approval
- Violation of agency rules that result in immediate dismissal for other agency employees
- Serious violations of the ethical code that endanger people served by The Arc of Central Alabama or its employees
- Potentially illegal activities that endanger people served by The Arc of Central Alabama or its employees

### **Appeal**

An intern may appeal any programmatic decision made during the process outlined above. An intern must submit their appeal of any decision in writing within three (3) business days of the decision to the Chief Psychologist.

Within three (3) business days, the Chief Psychologist will meet with the intern to discuss their appeal. Then, the Chief Psychologist will review relevant documentation and statements and, if necessary, interview relevant people.

Within five (5) business days after meeting with the intern and completing the interviews, the Chief Psychologist will decide what if any actions must be taken. The Chief Psychologist will inform the intern and the Training Director of the final decision in writing.

# Grievance Policy

Interns may submit a formal grievance if they believe their working conditions are unsatisfactory or disciplinary action was unjust.

If possible, the intern, their supervisor, or other person with whom the intern has the grievance should discuss the issue and try to resolve it informally. The intern may also informally report their concerns to the Training Director or Chief Psychologist.

If the intern and the other party cannot reach an informal resolution, interns should follow the policy outlined below:

1. The intern should submit a formal written grievance to the Chief Psychologist (Behavior Support Department Head). Within three (3) business days, the Chief Psychologist or their designee will meet with the grieving party to discuss the precipitating incident or incidents. Then, the Chief Psychologist will review documentation and statements about the grievance and, if necessary, interview relevant people. Within five (5) business days after meeting with the grieving party and completing the interviews, the Chief Psychologist will decide what actions must be taken.
2. If the intern's grievance is with the Chief Psychologist or the Chief Psychologist's decision is not satisfactory to the intern, the intern may submit the written grievance to The Arc of Central Alabama's Human Resources Department. The Human Resources Director will form a committee and serve as the chairperson. The committee will review documentation and statements about the grievance and, if necessary, interview relevant people. Within five (5) business days after the committee completes its work, the Human Resources Director will decide what actions must be taken.
3. If the intern is unsatisfied with the committee's response, they may submit a written grievance to the Administration. The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) or their designee will review all previous findings, interviews, and documentation on the grievance. They may interview the intern, witnesses, and others. The CEO will decide within five (5) business days from the date the grievance was received. The CEO or their designee's decision is final.
4. Each time an intern submits a written grievance to a new level, they must do so within five (5) business days after receiving the response to the grievance from the previous level.
5. All the above steps may vary due to exceptional circumstances only with the President's prior approval.

## Intern Stipend & Benefits

Interns receive a stipend of **\$42,000** consistent with other psychology internship training programs in the state of Alabama (as of October 2024, range \$27,479 to \$40,000; mean, \$34,799), regionally (as of October 2024, range \$11,440 to \$83,213; mean, \$34,821), and nationally (as of September 2024, range \$16,100 to \$115,000; mean, \$38,900).

We also offer interns Blue Cross Blue Shield of Alabama health insurance (for themselves, their legal spouse, and their dependents), a 403b retirement plan, mileage reimbursement, professional development expenses reimbursement, and paid time off.

Interns will accrue 7.69 hours of paid time off during each two-week pay period (25 days total across the internship year). The Arc's programs are open every day of the year, including on state and federal holidays. Interns are not expected to take paid time off to engage in work-related, professional development activities such as attending out-of-town professional conferences or defending their dissertation at their home graduate program.

Interns may submit expenses incurred related to professional development (e.g., conference travel and registration fees, BCBA continuing education, BCBA exam preparation, and BCBA exam fee) for reimbursement to The Arc. Requisitions for reimbursement are typically processed and funds disbursed within 10 business days.

The Arc will reimburse work-related mileage incurred by interns at a rate of \$0.40 per mile. This includes miles driven to partner organizations or group homes, errands on behalf of The Arc, and trips from one location of The Arc to another. Trips to and from an intern's residence to The Arc's main campus are excluded from reimbursement. Interns must complete and submit a mileage reimbursement form each month to be reimbursed. Interns can expect to travel approximately 50 to 150 miles per week (e.g., visits to and from group homes and bimonthly visits to The Arc of Walker County).